Tuesday, February 8, 2011 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 26 / No. 61 P18 | www.inquirer.net | Mobile Alert: Txt REGISTER to 2467

DOC GERRY MURDER

Ex-Palawan gov tagged slay brains

By Redrigio D. Arnis
Inquirer Southern Luzon

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A discharged Marine soldier has implicated former Palawan Gov. Joel T. Reyes and several local government officials in the Jan. 24 murder of broadcaster Gerry Ortega.

Rodolfo Edrad Jr., also known as Junjun Ilustre, told investigators of the National Bureau of Investigation in Manila on Sunday night that ex-

(CONTINUED ON A-2)

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS. FEARLESS VIEWS

FORMER Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes: Still out of the country

A QUESTION OF HONOR PNP Director Roberto Rosales with wife Cora challenges his accusers to come out in the open in Monday's press conference at Camp Crame

PNP PROBE

Rosales dares accusers to face him

By Aquiin Pupo
and Kristine Felisse Marguroy

THE PHILIPPINE National Police said it would ask PNP Director Roberto "Jesper" Rosales and another officer to "shed light" on allegations linking them to a car theft gang, even as Rosales challenged his accusers to face him. "Suntu-sunto" (Face-to-face) is easier to lower one the real "criminals in uniform."

As the uproar over the supposed links of police officers to car theft syndicates mounted, PNP officials yesterday said they were preparing to file criminal and administrative charges against a retired police officer for alleged connections with car thieves.

The PNP Highway Patrol Group head, Chief Supt. Leonardo Espina did not identify the retired officer but said he was a former chief superintendent. The charges will be filed "in a week or two," Espina told the Inquirer.

He said the PNP also planned to file cases similar charges against some officers still on active duty but who did not identify them or specify their ranks.

"We are set to file criminal and administrative charges as soon as possible," PNP spokesperson Chief Supt.

(CONTINUED ON A-2)

General has houses in US

COMPTROLLER'S HOUSE Sen. Jinggoy Estrada shows a photograph of a house which the wife of former AFP comptroller Jacinto Ligot reportedly bought in California.

Ligot's wife traveled overseas 42 times

By Christian V. Esguerra

CAN A GENERAL'S wife purchase houses in the United States and travel 42 times abroad without the husband knowing it?

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada yesterday confronted a former military comptroller, retired Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot, over the questionable activities of his wife—Erlinda Sambao Ligot—as part of the Senate investigation of corruption in the military.

At the blue-ribbon committee hearing, Estrada presented pictures of two houses in California allegedly under the name of Erlinda. In all, the senator alleged that the Ligots carried eight pieces of real estate in the United States.

Besides the houses, Estrada said he had documents showing that Erlinda traveled abroad 42 times from 1992 to 2004.

But what particularly piqued the senator's interest were the 11 trips she purportedly took with Yolanda Reyes, wife of then Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes, from 1999 to 2004.

Reyes is accused of pocketing P50 million in windfall gift

(CONTINUED ON A-14)

LUXE? Chaban recalls visit, estate purchases in America

Related stories

+ UN funds release shocks soldiers who went to East Timor / Page A6
+ Why the 'mistahs' have not expelled Garcia / Page A6
+ More whistle-blowers seen following P-Noy vow to reform bureaucracy / Page A6

WHAT'S INSIDE

NEWS / A4
Obama slated to meet Pacquiao on Feb. 15

WORLD / A20
Mubarak foes reject gov't reform offer

Across / A11
Aquino wants ARMM polls postponed

SPORTS / A14
Busy P-Noy not watching Azkals match vs Mongolians

BUSINESS / B1
Electricity bills to rise this month

'STANDARD PRACTICE'

₱20-M AFP slush fund bared

By TJ Burgonio

THE ARMED forces chief of staff as well as other officials had ready cash for their personal and operational use—a P50-million "tanking fund," a former military budget officer said yesterday.

The slush fund was on top of the initial cash gift, monthly allowances and unaudited money for the chief of staff.

Appearing at the Senate, where he blower George Rabusa testified that the fund had been existing before he came aboard in 2000, and was replenished by skimming off allowances for salaries and operational expenses of military units.

The conversion, he said, had the go-signal of military comptrollers and the knowledge of state auditors who received commissions.

"That particular amount is intended for our expenses upstairs from the chief of staff to 16," Rabusa said at the inquiry into the plea bargain between former military comptroller

(CONTINUED ON A-2)

No more free DOH condoms on Valentine's

By Jocelyn R. Uy

BAD NEWS for lovers: On Valentine's Day, the Department of Health (DOH) won't be around to give away free condoms to couples smitten by temptations.

Health Secretary Enrique Ona has announced his department would not be doing what it did around this time last year when it handed condoms to adult customers at the popular Category Three Market in Manila.

Instead of condoms, the DOH will be dispensing advice.

(CONTINUED ON A-2)

Pichay received ₱1.5M—Rabusa

By Marlen Ramos
Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Christine O. Avendaño

THE WHISTLE from a military slush fund benefited some lawmakers, including former Sultan del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay who allegedly received P500,000 on at least three occasions, whistle-blower George Rabusa said at a Senate hearing yesterday.

Under questioning from Sen. Teofisto Guingona III, Rabusa said Pichay, Jolo Mayor Sakur Tan and other Commission on Audit auditors and retired military officials had received huge sums from the "conversion" of military funds.

Accompanied by his lawyer Saul Mohaya, Rabusa was at

(CONTINUED ON A-2)

PICHAY. 'I categorically deny that I received any funds from the AFP.'

CABRERA. COA resident auditor detailed with body for 13 years.

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

2PCS 4 25 19 / 17 24 / 12 23
4D 7 4 8 7
SUERTRES 4 2 5 / 7 8 9 / 5 0 3
MEGALOTTO 6/45 11 10 21 25 30 45 P12,110,388.40
6/55 GRAND LOTTO 3 11 22 42 45 47 P67,674,726.80

Lacson seeks clarification from CA

By TJ Burgonio and Nikko Dizon

THE LAWYER of fugitive Sen. Panfilo Lacson filed a motion yesterday with the Court of Appeals (CA) seeking clarification on whether or not the arrest warrant against the senator had been quashed.

Alexander Poblador said they were seeking the clarification in view of the ongoing debate over whether or not the Feb. 2 ruling, which overturned a trial court finding of "probable cause" to indict Lacson for the 2000 Dacer-Corbito murders, automatically nullified a pending arrest warrant for the senator.

Poblador said Lacson, who has been in hiding for more than a year now, would probably not surface until the issue is clarified.

"My advice to him is the same. You should have the legal process. But he has made a personal decision. And I doubt he will surface before this matter is clarified," he told reporters.

Although the appeals court had ruled in Lacson's favor, Justice Secretary Leila de Lima said the ruling was not yet final, and the arrest warrant against Lacson still stood.

Malacañang has reportedly not taken a stand on the issue and would await the decision of the justice secretary.

Presidential Spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said the appeals court did not state but implied in its decision that since there was no probable cause, the arrest warrant against Lacson could not be issued.

"But what was clear was that the CA decision was not yet final and executory since the parties have 15 days to file a motion for reconsideration," Lacierda said.

Lacierda said the issue here was whether or not "the movement of arrest had been lifted as a result of the decision or not."

De Lima dismissed urgings from Lacson's allies to the Senate for her not to enforce the standing warrant against Lacson after the new court ruling on the case.

"I am in a quandary on that issue... I am in a bind now. If I say that the warrant of arrest is subsisting, do you expect me to say 'don't implement it.' If he (Lacson) surfaces, don't implement it? What kind of an accompaniment is that?" De Lima told reporters yesterday.

A laughing stock

"What's the counselling myself if I say yes, the warrant of arrest is valid but if he surfaces, I tell law enforcers not to arrest him? Or should I now tell the (NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) to stop their manhunt? It's also some step backward for me. It would become a laughing stock.)"

De Lima said she had met with the team of prosecutors handling the Dacer-Corbito case, as well as former police Supt. Cezar Mancao II and his lawyer-Bodyguard Topacio Fernan.

She said she advised the public prosecutors and private lawyers to convene a joint conference with the Office of the Solicitor General, which is representing the justice department and the public prosecutors in the case, to discuss the "merits and demerits" and their course of action.

'Ready to die'

Mancao, who attended the meeting with De Lima, said he stood by his claim that Lacson was involved in the killings of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito.

Asked if he was now relieved by his attack because of the CA's dismissal of the case against Lacson, Mancao said he was taking security precautions but shrugged, "I am ready to die."

The CA dismissed the case against Lacson because of inconsistencies in the affidavits of Mancao.

Explained in court

Topacio said in a separate interview that the inconsistencies pointed out by the appeals court had already been explained by Mancao in trial court hearings that were meant to evaluate if the testimonies were relevant.

The inconsistencies were due to prevailing pressures and duress when his client's initial affidavit was prepared, he said.

"They (appellate court justices) had not seen the transcript of stenographic notes where Colonel Mancao, in fact, had had adequately explained the reasons why there was such a variance between the first and second affidavits," Topacio said.

For the record

Topacio said he had told De Lima of his client's plan to file a motion to intervene in the case.

"In this late stage, this might be denied by the court. But we will still do it for the record, to put on record the fact that we feel that our substantive rights have been affected by the ruling," Topacio said.

Topacio's only request was for the state prosecutors to handle the motion for reconsideration, amid fear that Office of the Solicitor General because of its alleged "lack of zeal and effort as shown in their pleadings."

Insights for comments, Solicitor General Jose Anselmo Cadiz said Topacio's statements were "unfair."

Meanwhile, the lawyer of the Dacer family said there was a strong probability that other accused in the Dacer-Corbito case will follow the ruling of the Court of Appeals, assailing the credibility of Mancao.

Lawyer Demosthenes Caramoles told reporters at the Baguhan na Diosdado Diwid that he would be filing a motion for reconsideration with the appellate court within the week.

"We will submit the motion by reconsideration before the CA, as well as state matters that they might have forgotten to mention. If it doesn't go well in the CA, then we elevate the case to the Supreme Court... There is a long way to go. After the CA, there is the Supreme Court."

Caramoles said the ruling of the appellate court was "not on the merits of the case and therefore did not amount to an acquittal." With reports from Jeannette I. Andrade and Christine O. Avendaño

Rabusa: Not bagmen but central bank

HE'S, HE WERE not the bagmen. We were the "central bank."

Whistleblower George Rabusa made this clarification yesterday to correct the public perception that he and Air Force Col. Antonio Lim were the "bagmen" or the ones who delivered millions of pesos in dusk funds to some Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chiefs of staff.

"It's unfair to accuse us of being the bagmen," Rabusa, a former military budget officer, told the Senate blue ribbon committee inquiring into the plea bargain agreement between ex-comptroller Carlos Garcia and government prosecutors.

He then went on to name the persons he claimed were the real bagmen: the executive assistants of then AFP chiefs of staff Angelo Reyes, Diomedio Villanueva and Efraim Genuino, who picked up the money for their bosses from his office.

"They called us the central bank because we were the ones conveying the money," he said.

Rabusa said one Major Devosa and Lt. Emerson Anggalo served as executive assistants to Reyes, Col. Hilario Arandela and one Colonel Baguio to Villanueva; and Lt. Col. Hernán de Leon to Genuino.

Rabusa was Lacson's aide from 2000 to 2002 under Reyes, Villanueva and Genuino. He testified earlier that the three had pocketed millions of pesos in military funds, which was corroborated by his successors. Jpa. TJ Burgonio

Palace: RH bill no longer a priority

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG has dropped its plan to include its responsible parenthood (RH) bill from the list of priority bills it will ask Congress to prioritize this year.

Invoking the Bohol bard's creed in its previous from Dra. Catholic Church, Presidential Spokesperson Edwin Lacierda stated yesterday Malacañang no longer planned to present the bill to Congress leaders at the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council's (Ledac) meeting on Feb. 28 because it had not yet finished its dialogue with the bishops on the Ob-gyn-drafted RH bill.

Malacañang officials, who include Lacierda, are set to meet again with the bishops at the end of the month.

"We are not pushing, we are not interfering the bill until after we finish the dialogue with the bishops," he told reporters.

While he said it was "peculiar" the bill would still be sent to Congress this year, it might not be certified as urgent by President Aquino who had said he wanted to see his powers to certify bills as urgent only be necessary deemed really urgent.

"The President has maintained (he is for) the judicious use of the certification powers of the president. He basis himself only in the constitutional requirements of certifying a priority bill as urgent," Lacierda said.

As she made clear the Ob-Gyn bard pushing in de-facto the consolidated RH measure now set for plenary debate in the House of Representatives.

"This is purely the handiwork of the legislative branch. Let me make a clarification. The executive branch has not submitted to responsible parenthood bill," he told reporters.

This as Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa Jr. told ABS-CBN News that President Aquino remained committed above coming up with an RH bill and would not back down.

In a previous dialogue, the Palace and the Church agreed on the need to provide people easily access to information on family planning methods, including both natural and artificial methods.

Lacierda's statement means the Palace had dropped the RH bill from its priority measure since as related Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal met with President Aquino yesterday in Malacanang. Lacierda said it was a courtesy call on the President.

Meanwhile, pro-life advocates will stage a protest and prayer rally in Metro Manila and Cebu City over the weekend in a bid to lasts more Filipinos against the RH bill.

Dr. Rene Baltazar, country director of Human Life International, said over Radio Veritas yesterday the organization will hold a prayer rally against the family planning measure being pushed in Congress on Friday at Quezon Memorial Circle in Cebu City.

On Saturday in Metro Manila, an interfaith group has scheduled a march for life at the Pinoy Power Monument on Edsa, according to the Cardinal-nun Today "Pro-life

With a report from Analyn R. Uy

Shell, Eastern raise fuel prices

LOCAL oil companies are again raising gasoline and diesel prices by 70 centavos a liter and oil kerosene by 85 a liter, making given the upheaval in the price of oil in the world market. The turmoil in Egypt also contributed to the price volatility.

Independent oil firm Eastern Petroleum Corp. said oil giant Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. made their announcements yesterday, while the other oil companies had yet to follow suit as of press time.

The latest oil price hike follows a string of increases since mid-December, except for last week, when the oil firms rolled back prices by 75 centavos a liter for gasoline and 35 centavos a liter for diesel and kerosene. Amy R. Raver

Private sector may import rice, says NFA

THE PHILIPPINE government will allow the private sector to import up to 163,036 metric tons (MT) of rice to solidify food security measure in light of tightening supplies of staples due to the unpredictable weather.

In statements posted on its website the National Food Authority (NFA) said it was opening the importation of 163,000 MT of rice to minimize its rice losses, including farmers' organizations and cooperatives, under the country's specific quota program (CSQ).

Under the CSQ mandated by the World Trade Organization, milled rice would be sourced from Thailand, China, India and Australia.

The private sector would be allowed to import as much as 98,000 MT of rice from Thailand 20,000 MT from China 23,036 MT from India and 15,000 MT from Australia, the NFA said.

Yet, traders are be allocated a maximum volume of 5,000 MT for the entire 2011. However, all rice importation under the program are subject to the payment of 40 percent duties and tariffs," the NFA's notice said.

NFA administrator Angelito Banayo said the government would decide on the amount of rice it will shell import soon time this month.

"The NFA council is still reviewing the figures. Council members are out to careful because of the feelings that there are excessive importation of rice in recent years," said Banayo.

According to Banayo, the government is monitoring the price of rice worldwide. Kristine L. Alave

Soon, betting on the ponies just a text away

HORSE racing aficionados will soon be able to place their bets via their mobile phones and the Internet.

The offer is said of breakfast, joint ORR Network Inc. and the country's oldest and largest racing club, Manila Jockey Club Inc. (MJC), signed a deal last Friday to expand the betting reach of the equestrian sport.

"Existing technology will make horses feel the convenience of betting on horse racing," said ORR chairman/CEO Felipe Gozon in a statement.

He said advancements in technology had made the partnership inevitable. He said the company was also studying offering the same service for cockfighting, which is also popular in the country.

Gozon said the service would be available by the middle of the year, but declined to give a definite date.

Todd Gollaher, president of the ORR subsidiary, ORR New Media Inc., said the first real MJC would invest P1.6 million each in the joint venture company to be formed.

MJC's main racing operations are at its facility in Carmona, Cavite. It also operates off-track betting stations and is expanding its OTB network in Metro Manila as well as in the provinces.

ORR New Media manages the television network's presence online through several sites such as ORRnews.tv, racing.ph, and pep.ph. Paolo G. Montecillo

Obama-Pacquiao meeting at White House on Feb. 15

By Ray Laurea

THE MEETING between the world's most powerful man and the world's best boxer is scheduled on Feb. 15.

Posted for ground king Manny Pacquiao confirmed his meeting with US President Barack Obama in an interview with Philippine Entertainment Portal's Rizal U. Mendoza on Saturday night.

Pacquiao said he received the invitation for him to meet Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House this February during the interview which took place during the 50th birthday party of Emmanuel A. Pacquiao's eldest child, at Palms Country Club in Alabang.

Pacquiao is slated to leave for Los Angeles tomorrow to kick off the press tour of his May 7 showdown with American Shane Mosley for the World Boxing Organization welterweight crown at MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nevada.

According to Pacquiao, who'll be accompanied by wife Jinkee to the White House, both the Obamas will extend a visit to coincide the Hispanics.

Key members of Team Pacquiao, including the boxer's lawyers and chief of staff Sonny Coral, will accompany the eight-division world champion in the press tour, but only the Pacquiao couple leave Team Jinkee for the White House.

Pacquiao, who is also slated to meet with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, was supposed to meet with Obama after his 12-round demolition of Antonio Margarito last November, but it fell a song.

The press tour will start at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles on Feb 10. It will also take him to San Diego, California's second-largest city, on Feb. 12 and the Chelsea Piers in New York City on Feb. 14.

Pacquiao's meeting with Reid, whose re-endorsed to host your's US elections, will also take place on Feb. 15.

General has houses in America, says Jinggoy

From page A1

ALLEGED home of Ligot in Buena Park, California

Photo courtesy of Inquirer.net

justment when he retired in 2001 after 26 months in office, on top of a P5-million monthly allowance during his term. He denied the allegations.

Shopping money

Behind Lt. Col. Jinggoy Rabusa, a military budget officer from 2000 to 2002, said he used to hand out shopping money whenever the wife of Reyes traveled in the country and abroad. He said million and pocket for accommodations were shouldered by the Office of the Chief of Staff.

"The money coming from me was only for shopping," Rabusa told senators, recalling that he once gave the generals' wives $30,000 in pocket money.

Sen. Teofisto Guingona III, chair of the blue ribbon committee, said Enrile would be summoned to the next hearing on Feb. 17.

Subpoena said a subpoena would be issued to Reyes to compel the former AFP chief of staff to show up. The committee also delivered a decision on the motion to cite Reyes and his lawyer, and retired military comptroller Carlos Garcia for contempt.

Ligot, the military comptroller when Reyes was the chief of staff, denied any knowledge of his wife's trends, such to the detailed of senators. At one point, he said his wife might have bought her trips "secret."

"And when might have been her reasons for keeping them secret?" Estrada asked him in Filipino. "Even our pet dogs or cats, when they go astray, we look for them. What more if it's your wife missing?

California house

Rabusa's owns a house of 7,532 Buenos Avenue, Buena Park, California, according to Rabusa. He said Ligot's wife bought the property in cash for $385,000 in 2002.

The second property is at 1340 South Coleman Circle in Anaheim, California, which was worth $594,000 when Ligot's wife allegedly bought it on Jan. 23, 2003. Rabusa said the said a portion in cash and sought a loan for the remainder of the acquisition cost.

Duenap

Estrada said it got that he had gotten word that Rabusa was used as a "dummy" for the retired general, who allegedly owned the Buena Park property. He said he was shocked that the info was fronting for Teresita Reyes as the real owner of the Anaheim house.

"I would like to invoke my right against self-incrimination," Ligot replied, saying the houses had herein were the subject of a pending case against him in the Sandiganbayan.

Ligot said he learned about the houses only after they were included in the charges in the antigraft court. He recalled asking his wife in Filipino: "What happened?"

When shown pictures of the houses, the former military comptroller said it was the first time he saw them.

Why Los Angeles?

In the 13 times that Estrada and Duenas traveled together in the years, a meeting during a stop of choice was Los Angeles.

Bureau of Immigration records made available during the hearing showed that the two were visited LA seven times, San Francisco and Singapore twice, each, and Hong Kong on six occasions.

"What is there in Los Angeles, 41 may old?" Estrada asked, to which Ligot again invoked his right against self-incrimination.

The first travel was to San Francisco on Philippine Airlines flight 101/84 on Sept. 4, 1999. The stayed returned three months later on Dec. 4 from Hawaii.

"Whom your wife was away for a month, you didn't look for her? Didn't you ever think she was missing, that you just found out that she would not be home when you got home?" Estrada asked Ligot.

Entourage

Rabusa said the amount of shopping money he gave to Reyes' aide depended on the trip and the size of the entourage. He said a foreign trip could include a party of nine: three generals, usually composed of wives of other military officials and civilian friends.

Rabusa said Senators once asked to meet him in Los Angeles in one of those trips and requested an "additional allowance." He said he gave her "not less than $5,000."

Ligot said he never had to give pocket money to his relatives for travels because he supposedly gave her his entire salary throughout his military career. "Others have friends in our relationship," he said.

Ligot said his wife's frequent travels could have been financed by first relatives in the United States.

Estrada told him, "If she lavished all those and she used your salary, it would not have sufficed even for plane tickets."

₱20-million AFP slush fund exposed

From page A1

Carlos Garcia used procurement in connection with the former's plunder case.

Standard practice

Rabusa said the fund was intended for the personal and operational requirement of the AFP chief of staff down to the detachment.

"We only inherited this," he said, indicating that this had been existing before the term of former Senator AFP chiefs of staff—Angelo Reyes, Hermoclito Villanueva and Roy Cimatu—under whom he had served as budget officer.

In two previous Senate hearings, Rabusa disclosed the practice of giving an increasing share of each year's million for fuel (sub gift) and an outgoing one each palace (unused money).

The gunsalong was supposedly P30 million each for Villanueva and Cimatu and the remaining P60 million for Reyes. Plus million for Villanueva and P80 million for Cimatu. The amounts were in addition to the 95 million that the chief of staff was supposed to getting monthly.

Kept in vault

Rabusa, who was a lieutenant colonel then, said the P20-million fund was kept in a vault in his office.

When he was relieved in 2002, Rabusa said he turned over the P20 million to his successor then serving budget officer Col. Antonio "Sonny" Lim, who then turned over the money to their comptroller Garcia.

Lim confirmed this, saying "General Garcia told me to turn over the amount to him. He will take charge of the amount."

Rabusa declined to say where the money went and invoked again his right to self-incrimination, saying his answers might be covered by two Supreme Court decisions.

AFP's offices

J1 - Personnel
J2 - Intelligence
J3 - Operations
J4 - Logistics
J5 - Plans
J6 - Communications and Communication Electronics and Information System, integrating during the term of Gen. AFP Chief of Staff Oscar Abia
J7 - Civil Military Operations
J8 - Education and Training
J9 - Reforms and Peace or 2D functions

COA auditor tried to burn papers, says Rabusa

By Pinkee Ramos

A COMMISSION on Audit (COA) auditor assigned to check up on the financial transactions of the military intelligence unit had tried to burn documents to cover up the "counter-intel" of colonies amount his soldiers' funds into a slush fund, according to former military budget officer Georgia Rabusa.

Testifying before the Senate blue ribbon committee, Rabusa said state auditor Divina Cabrera once asked for his help if the papers, which purportedly showed how funds of the intelligence service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) was spent for other purposes, would be burned.

Rabusa described Cabrera, who supervised the validation audit of Isafp for 13 years, as a close friend, being his former boss.

"Sad to inform the testimony of my business, on one occasion she called me to her office and told me: 'Ger, these documents at my house are outdated, compiling, he might as well burn the just inside my office,'" Rabusa narrated.

He said he told her that they could not select which documents should be burned as his own staff has been doing as might set the whole building on fire.

Rabusa said he refused the request of Cabrera, who also claimed to meet with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, who was supposed to meet with Obama after his 12-round demolition of Antonio Margarito last November, but it fell a song.

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Shinnered off salaries

Like savings in a bank, the fund had to be maintained at P20 million, otherwise it had to be replenished with skimmed off salaries and operational expenses in the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp), Rabusa said.

"This is like a sinking fund. When you compare it to water, and it reaches a certain level, you have to do something to fill up the tank again," he said.

Then Col. Victor Corpus was the Isafp chief. The former budget officer said.

Replenishment

To replenish the amount, Rabusa said the budget office would convey funds for maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) and personnel services (PS) into the slush fund.

When the blue ribbon committee chair Sen. Teofisto Guingona asked him if he was conveying funds meant for soldiers' salaries, Rabusa said: "There's no other source but the PS."

Rabusa said his group was able to do that because of savings from existing items like that that the soldiers had submitted a higher "troop ceiling" than the actual AFP strength or the ground to the Department of Budget and Management for the succeeding year.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, chair of the committee on ways and means, said that the budget was released to the military based on the troop ceiling, not on the number of troops in the field.

Through a daily communication, Rabusa presented documents that he himself had signed as budget officer conveying Isafp's PS funds into the slush fund.

PS means conversion

"If you see the term personnel services, automatic. But's conversion," Rabusa said, pointing to items in the documents.

How big this, Guingona told Lt. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu, the current AFP vice chief of staff: "That is something that we should look into, in so far as it's a source of conversion for corruption."

Common practice

The practice of conversion had apparently become so common that even then Sen. Biwa Aho had asked Rabusa to convert PS funds for the operating expenses of their office. It, which he then heeded.

He added for my help to free up the MOOE so he can use this to be released to upcoming units... I told him my only source is the PS for soldiers," Rabusa said.

He said that auditor Divina Cabrera and by extension her immediate boss, then Commissioner Raul Flores of the Commission on Audit, were aware of the conversion of body funds for the slush fund.

"The auditors are aware of this," Rabusa said.

But Cabrera, who was described with the Isafp for 13 years until 2003, denied Rabusa's allegations.

Incidentally Cabrera's summary Rabusa said that if the budget office had converted PS) million, it would have to release a P5-million additional allowance.

Two percent of the P5 million or P100,000 was given to Cabrera.

She even asked for me in cruise, Ehh 1 percent is 2 percent," he said. Cabrera again denied this.

Retired Procurement Wendell Sulit said she and the other prosecutors would consult one another on other course of action to take on when Guingona described as "strong accusations" against Cabrera.

"I think all the accusations given by Rabusa. I have that I did my job in matters of the COA. I based all my audit work on the rules and regulations prescribed by the COA," Cabrera said.

Rabusa also said that Cabrera individual that is her "boss-like," Raul Flores, whom he met at Hotel's was on Pilot Avenue in Quezon City and Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

He said he handed Flores an envelope containing P200,000 each time they met. He said they and at least three times.

Rabusa and Cabrera are close friends.

Cabrera said she did not ask for a reimbursement from Isafp because she only audited simple. Gamesthese covering personnel liquidations, auditors are assigned to agencies for durations.

In the 13 years that she was assigned to Isafp, she said the agency's cut liquidations on the liquidation of intelligence funds ever "in order." But the COA issued suspension orders "if we find discrepancies," she said.

"I have heard of it," she said when asked if she knew about the practice of conversion.

Loyola Grand Villas

Cabrera, however, said that she did not find any irregularity in the liquidation of Isafp funds because she audited only documents that were submitted to her.

Under grilling by Defensor, Cabrera admitted to owning a P2.5-million house on a 600-sq. m property at the posh Loyola Grand Villas subdivision in Quezon City. She had the house built in 2007.

Defensor then remarked: "If the COA is listening now, they may want to review the assignment of Mrs. Cabrera to the Philippine Navy because she has been in Isafp for 13 years. Because I have been in the Philippine Navy, 6th with the AFP I think professor chooses that at this point when all those evidences are being made in this hearing I call on the COA to recall and reassign Mr. Cabrera immediately."

Rabusa reasoned that he and Sison he had "convinced" almost P1 billion in 2002, and this interest level is finally and 2?

Asked if the release of portions of P1 billion for Isafp, which has an annual budget of 30 people, including salaries, operational abroad, did not raise alarm bells, Cabrera said allocations for PS were processed in the general headquarters, and only allocations for the PS of defense attaches were released to the Isafp.

Oversight

In the wake of Rabusa's exposé, seven congressmen composing the subtitled files to the Office of the Ombudsman respectively filed a bill mandating the oversight and audit of billions of pesos in government intelligence and confidential funds.

Representatives Teddy Casiño and Neri Javier Colmenares of Bayan Muna, Lorenzo Tanada III and Erin Tañada of Gabriela, Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, Antonio Tinio of ACT Teachers, and Raymond Palatino of Kabataan Party-list filed HB No. 41.27 or the proposed Intelligence and Confidential Funds Transparency Act of 2011. With a report from Cynthia D. Balloon

Population boom at fruit bat sanctuary on southern isle

MILLIONS OF fruit bats are flocking to a cave sanctuary on a small Philippine island and reproducing solidly as humans become an increasing threat to other nearby habitats, a conservationist said yesterday.

Biologists have been surprised by the fruit bats as they seem to be breeding all year round and not just during their regular April to July season, said Norma Members, who heads a conservation foundation that manages the sanctuary.

"The cave is overflowing. The bats are on the ground, they are seen in the open, which is very unusual. The bats are defecating (the bats) all year round," she said.

An estimated 2 million bats are crowding inside the 300-meter-long Monkor Bat Cave on the southern island of Siquijor, said Members, whose family owns the property where the cave is located.

The overcrowding has become so bad that male bats are often seen attacking females, she said.

According to her, the bats are apparently seeking refuge in the cave because people were hunting the animals for food or harvesting bat guano in other habitats.

They will get hurt by the outbreak because guano is a good source of pesticide, she said.

Members said she has members had been building up since 2006, when she created the sanctuary.

Guinness World Records last year said the sanctuary may qualify as having the largest colony of Geoffroy's Rousette Fruit Bats. AFP

need a job?

Lozada sees more Mendozas, Rabusas

By Marlon Ramos
and TJ Burgonio

WHISTLE BLOWER Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada yesterday said President Aquino's promise to reform the bureaucracy could encourage more Heidi Mendozas and George Rabusas to expose government irregularities.

Lozada, a former official who claimed he was instructed to "moderate the greed" in the rigged $329-million NBN-ZTE deal during the Arroyo administration, said the revelations of the congressional inquiries did not surprise him.

He said his knew that misuse of funds exceeded by Mendoza, a former auditor of the Commission on Audit (COA), and Rabusa, a former budget official, was the reason why the Philippines, was rampant in the military and this is any other state agency.

"What surprised me is the number of the whistleblowers who have stepped forward to tell the truth," Lozada told the legislators in executive session.

"I hope that more Filipinos would imitate to with their love of country and courage to tell the truth," he added.

Along with witness from the Arroyo administration of Mayor Benigno Aquino in the Philippines, Lozada attended yesterday's resumption of the Senate inquiry into the disputed plea bargain agreement between prosecutors and former military comptroller Carlos Garcia.

He said he was contacted that Mendoza and Rabusa were credible witnesses because they directly saw how crooked military officials pocketed hundreds of millions of pesos in public money.

Aquino promise

"I hope the President would fulfill his vow to lead to take the righteous way and make corrupt people in government accountable," Lozada said, adding that the hope that most Filipinos have in Mr. Aquino to personally prosecute Mendoza and Rabusa is endless.

"I also hope that no valuable Heroes would suffer (as this," said Lozada, who has claimed he has actually survived attempts on his life since he exposed the then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of murdering in the $329-million deal to dignify win the nation's businessmen.

Speaking at the resumption of the Senate blue ribbon committee hearing, its chair, Sen. Teofisto Guingona III, assisted the Armed Forces for including its own investigation into the alleged anomalies.

"We are very hopeful that something good would come out of this," he said.

Guingona said the revelations made by Rabusa and his former deputy, lt. Col. Antonio Lim, bolstered the plunder case against Garcia.

God is watching us

Mendoza briefly returned to the Senate inquiry yesterday and testified on the scope of her work as auditor.

She said she had also audited "confidential funds" of the Air Force, National Museum, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Local Water Utilities Administration, the Commission on Audit and several government units.

All the cases she had handled resulted in the filing of charges, she said.

Flouting this, Senator Miguel Luis Villafuerte, also presiding, Lozada "that speaks well of you."

Members replied: "I look at every engagement as an opportunity to fulfill my mission of building a Catholic, being a Christian, and knowing God is always watching our actions."

Poised by her former colleagues' charge that she was destroying her office with her revelations, Mendoza said she decided to step out inquiry pertaining to COA.

Death threats

She later told reporters that she had been encouraged by some of her cases, without the approval to telling her "Mama, don't give up on this case as I've not given up on you."

She also hinted that recordings of her testimonies were played on their mobile phone once the turned on, an attempt at intimidation.

"Those who are behind it, God bless you," she said, wondering why after all these years working as an auditor it's only now she was getting such threats. "I'm not doing anything wrong. I don't deserve these threats."

Mendoza also went to the justice department to discuss details about her coverage in the witness protection program.

Justice Secretary Leila de Lima said she had heard about the reported death threats against Mendoza. "That's why it's very important that she is fully secured," she said. She declined to give details of the program.

In Lucena City, Calz de Gracia, retired police officer Mendoza urged Filipinos to not give the public in the face of death threats. "We are all deeply worried about her and her family," she said in a phone interview.

Audit the auditors

Although COA officials have expressed concern over misconceptions that Mendoza's testimony may have provided, the Commission on Unity, Reconciliation and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) assured in front of the commission to voice support for Mendoza.

As government employees, we swore to serve the people. Like Heidi, our loyalty to our people will be with them as the people begin," Courage president Ferdinand Gaite said in a statement.

He said that the revelations in Congress showed a need to "audit the auditors."

In Malacañang, Mayor Alfredo Lim said that a fund-raising campaign for Mendoza began Feb. 1 but reached P92,000 as of noon the.

"It is in no answer that those who know the truth would remain lamer and strong to tell the truth," Lim said. "How many and women who find themselves in the line of her would find justice and vindication for choosing a calling that demands nothing less than their own lives, should their country require it," Lim said in a statement. Helen Flores, Leila B. Salaverria and Jaymee T. Gamil in Malacañang, and Delfin T. Mallari, Inquirer Southern Luzon

UN funds misuse shocks soldiers who went to East Timor

By Fe Zamora

ALLEGATIONS in a Philippines congressional inquiry that UN funds have been misused as padlocks on a windfall of gifts, including generals of the Armed Forces of the Philippines have shocked soldiers who had served in UN peacekeepers in East Timor, their former commanders said yesterday.

Retired Lt. Gen. Jesus de los Santos, the Filipino head of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (Unmet), told Pedro Inquirer that he was surprised by claims that a UN funds was even pocketed up personally in New York by a generals.

"How did that happen? The cabinet of funds was a government-to-government transaction. How is pocketed in UN procedure? This is really shocking," he said.

In los Santos said that revelations by former AFP budget officer Lt. Col. George Rabusa and former Commission on Audit (COA) auditor Heidi Mendoza about UN funds being diverted for personal use of generals had also confused soldiers who served in East Timor from 1999 to 2003.

He said the soldiers were worried about how the UN procedures would affect the deployment of AFP peacekeepers in the future. "We have to address our troops. The Filipino peacekeepers has a very good reputation. They are among the best," he said.

In los Santos said the United Nations had rigid standards in peacekeeping.

"As the head of the multinational force, it was my duty to inspect and certify the number of soldiers from each country. You cannot claim 10 there were 1,000 troops, it was 1,000. You cannot add or subtract. The protocol was followed," he said.

DE LOS SANTOS: How did that happen? This is really shocking.

"The UN has its own representative to review the books, if the expenditure is called for them. And the Filipino troops showed they were very capable. Peacekeeping is one area where we in the AFP can excel," De los Santos said.

He said he was surprised by Mendoza's revelation that "a client from the UN headquarters in New York was picked up personally by a still unnamed general.

"We did not have a liaison office in New York. The other countries have. Maybe that's why it happened that way," De los Santos said.

He said that in East Timor, each soldier was reminded no MWR per month (that is $50 worth of allowance) per day. But the soldiers' equipment and other needs were supplied by the AFP, subject to reimbursement by the United Nations.

"There was a process that was strictly followed," De los Santos said.

The peacekeepers were tasked to secure the area by conducting patrols and holding civil military operations.

Why the 'mistahs' have not expelled Garcia

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE PUZZLE: Military Academy graduates (PMAAs) provided a crucial support to retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia despite his conviction in 2005 by a court-martial because the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) did not uphold the ruling.

Retired Lt. Gen. Pedro Dumlao, president of the PMAAs, said in a news conference that since the conviction is appealed to the President, the PMAAs' board would act on his expulsion, regardless a dispute to "Carabao," a pambansang brotherhood of officers.

On Dec. 2, 2005, Garcia, who was AFP comptroller from 2001 to 2004, was found guilty of violating Article 96 of the Articles of War for not declaring his true assets and for enjoying personal use of, or "proceeds" of, money in the Armed Forces.

The member of PMA Class 1971 was dishonorably discharged and sentenced to time served in detention, which was two years. His retirement benefits were forfeited.

Garcia was the highest ranking AFP official to be convicted by a military court.

Dumlao, in an article PMAAA director, said the last expulsion in several years age involved an Air Force pilot convicted of drug trafficking in the United States.

But Paul PMAAA can't penalize and retired police deputy director general, said expulsion proceedings against Garcia would begin once the decision of the court-martial was approved only finality by the Commander in Chief.

"Of course that will be the process," said Paul, who claims the PMAAA ethics and professional conduct committee and a committee, or "tribunal," of Garcia.

Garcia's membership has been suspended, according to Dumlao.

"Even if his conviction by court-martial is not yet final, the board has decided to suspend his membership. When his conviction is final he will be expelled," Dumlao said.

A check with the AFP Judge Advocate General confirmed that Garcia's court-martial conviction "was not as final again" by the Office of the President.

Conviction ignored

Alapitis said he did not know why Ret. President Arroyo did not accept Garcia's conviction.

What he is sure of, he said, was that the PMAAA was not in. Instead of the Office of the President's lack of action on the case.

Alapitis said according to the PMAAA's by-laws, members who had been convicted with finality of "acts of moral turpitude" should be expelled.

He said Garcia's admission in bribery and money laundering under the plea bargain was not yet considered a conviction with finality.

"If that is already final, General Garcia stands to be expelled," Alapitis said.

The PMAAA chair, Maximiliano Bay, Rodolfo Biazon, of PMA Class 1961, also said members were considering expelling 1964 alumni implicated in the corruption scandal.

The PMAAA agreed that we should not preempt the ongoing judicial proceedings," Biazon said.

Alumni support probe

In a statement issued on Monday, the PMAAA gave its support to the congressional hearings conducted by Congress and the defense and justice departments on the alleged misuse of hundreds of millions of military funds "with the end in view of sparing the innocent from punishing the guilty."

"Such trivial accusations of graft and corruption to tarnish the honor, integrity and reputation of officers and gentlemen of the corps of alumni and must be opposed," the statement said, referring to the high and noble traditions of the military service and of the association, it said.

Also yesterday, retired Navy Commodore Ben Robles expressed concern that the Senate inquiry on the military could turn out to be a witch-hunt against Garcia if it is not impartial.

A member of the Feliciano Commission that investigated corruption in the military in the wake of the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, Robles said that panel's evidence AFP chiefs of staff were unbiased in probing the Senate inquiry into the case against Garcia.

Batting average

Speaking at the Kapihan sa Manuwal Hotel, Robles revealed that the Feliciano Commission had found that the batting average of the Office of the Ombudsman in investigating plunder cases was an a low of 1 percent.

In one lawsuit investigated by the panel, Robles pointed out that the Ombudsman's prosecutors did everything possible to lose the case." He said that, often, prosecutors did not attend hearings or did not provide sufficient evidence against the accused.

That was, he stressed, why it was important to be focused by the Senate to not lose momentum in an issue which he pointed out was being diverted through the implementation of other people.

"My problem is, plunder or pandin is a crime. If you operate on a criminal, you start to scalpel. The Senate is using a knife. If you keep on hacking at the patient, you just might kill him," Robles said.

The Garcia issue is being diverted, he said, "because of some interested parties" (in 15 minutes of fame." With a report from Annaperry I. Andrade

Pichay received ₱1.5M, Rabusa tells Senate committee

From page A1

line Senator to name congressmen who allegedly accepted money from the military.

But when Gangosa insisted him that he could name the lawmakers, the former military budget officer said in Filipino: "I remember Congressman Pichay."

Asked to elaborate, Rabusa said: "Every time Pichay visited the office of the chief of staff, General (Cirilito) Garcia, who was then an) boss, would ask me to prepare P500,000 cash. Sometimes Pichay was already awaiting," Rabusa replied, citing instances from the mid-1990s.

Rabusa continued: "Sometimes only I would ask my assistant to help me prepare the P500,000."

Sen. Angelino Ejercito, who facilitated Rabusa's appearance as witness at the Senate inquiry into the plea bargain between government prosecutors and Garcia, to honor charges of contempt, asked Rabusa why the military would provide money to Pichay.

"I don't know. If I'm ordered to prepare the money, I would just do what The told because I remember it was then was (Major) General Garcia," Rabusa said.

Help in budget hearing

Pressed to elaborate, Rabusa said Pichay was "helping" the Armed Forces to handle the budget hearing in the House of Representatives since the lawmaker was then the chair of the House committee on national defense.

"He was just helping as defense budget sponsor," he said.

Rabusa said Pichay had received P500,000 in cash on at least three occasions during the term of then Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva.

Asked if some senators also received money for whistleblowers, Rabusa said he was not sure.

At in the previous proceedings, Garcia claimed he could not "recall" meeting "a certain Congressman Pichay."

Pichay denial

Pichay, who resolve senator in 2007 and lost, said that he did not get funds from the AFP when I was a member of the House," Pichay said.

He said it was not the defense committee chair who disbursed the funds. Budget for the House secretary Roberto Rubanzuela the vice chair of the appropriations committee.

Pichay, now the chair of the Local Water Utilities Administration, admitted to going to the AFP headquarters once but only to attend a command conference.

Liar

"In the hierarchy of the government bureaucracy, the Armed Forces chief of staff is equivalent to a mere director. So, why will I go there (to Villanueva's office). I will just call him," Pichay said, in explaining why he could not have gone to the office of Villanueva.

Pichay also ... I believed his request would be implanted me," Pichay said, adding that Rabusa's earlier testimony in the Senate may be put to jeopardy by the lies he is now giving against him.

Pichay said he had asked his lawyers to check what case he could file against Rabusa, saying that he could sue the latter for libel, slander or even for giving false testimony.

Pichay said he more than just made a mere denial, however, other lawmakers said.

"If it is true, then the former representative should be ready to explain his side. What is important is that Congress should get to the bottom of this issue," Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said in a statement.

The House defense committee chair, Mountaintop Rep. Rodolfo Ramos, said Pichay should be allowed to speak in the Senate to end speculations on whether Rabusa's accusations were true.

"We have to deal with this issue decisively. This (House) seems receiving military funds (is) not an 'established' practice," said Ramos, a former Armed Forces chief of staff.

Invitation

Gangosa said the Senate blue ribbon committee would invite Pichay to do until hearing.

"But, of course, Because the principle is when a person is accused, you have to give (him) personal notice. It would be inappropriate and to Senator him," Gangosa said the hesitant when asked if the committee would summon Pichay to appear before the committee.

BI cited for envoy's deportation

Ombudsman junks Chavit's case vs Miriam

By TJ Burgonio

THE SOUTH Korean government has cited officials of the Bureau of Immigration (BI) for the arrest and deportation of a UN Stabilizer employee wanted in South Korea for swindling a woman and her mother of 555 million won.

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales praised BI officer in charge Reynaldo Ledesma "for his outstanding involvement in building up the case for deportation of an important Taiwanese from Korea."

Antonino Aluning III, THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman has thrown out a graft complaint filed by Socorro Gov. Chavit Singson against Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago in connection with her privilege speech in which she denounced him as one of the big operators of "jueteng," an illegal numbers racket profiteering in Luzon.

"Senator Santiago is a member of the Senate and is thus beyond the disciplinary authority of the Office of the Ombudsman," the resolution said. It is ruling that state tribunal record by

In addition to applying the rule of "parliamentary immunity," the Office of the Ombudsman also said that "a deeper evaluation of the complaint shows that the same should be dismissed outright for want of palpable merit."

In his complaint, Singson said Santiago violated the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act when she tagged him as one of Luzon's jueteng lords in a privilege speech in September last year.

The law, according to the governor, punishes "any action that causes undue injury to any party through manifest partiality, evident bad faith or gross inexcusable negligence."

Singson said Santiago also went on a "tri-media blitz" in which she repeated what he described were "false and fabricated" accusations, damaging further his dignity, integrity and honor.

Responding to the complaint, Santiago said Singson could not file charges against her based on her privilege speech because it was covered by parliamentary immunity.

Moreover, the senator said the governor's complaint was meant "to scandalize, intimidate and humiliate her."

It is the second time that the Office of the Ombudsman has dismissed a case against Santiago over a privilege speech.

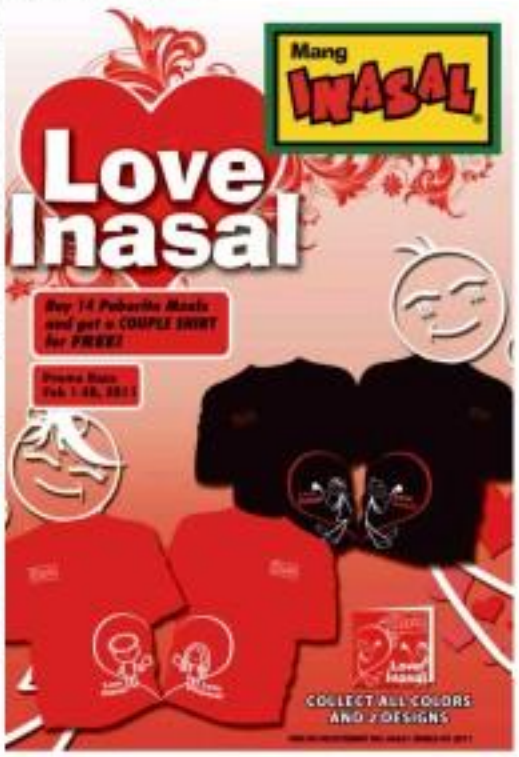
The first time was in the case of Abmudzin Sawiraga, which came on the heels of her privilege speech against then Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and his brother Rodolfo in connection with alleged corruption in the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the alleged misuse of the multibillion road user's tax.

Legal observers said that the dismissal of the two cases against Santiago bode ill for a similar complaint filed by Senate Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes against Sen. Joseph Estrada in the Office of the Ombudsman.

Barthelo Alemajes, the counsel of Reyes, also served as the lawyer for the complainants in the two cases against Santiago.

After Santiago delivered her privilege speech in the Senate on the alleged involvement of the Puno brothers in the road lot controversy, Alemajes also filed ruinous suits against the senator in the Supreme Court, Commission on Elections, and Office of the Ombudsman. All suits have been dismissed.

"It is apparent that Alemajes has a pattern of filing harassment cases against the opponents of his client," the senator's office said (to the economy).



INQUIRER

OPINION

Dying forests

THOUSANDS OF years ago, when the first humans arrived in the Philippines from Asia, they found an archipelago that was rich in natural resources, researcher Lawrence R. Heaney of the Field Museum of Chicago said. The land was covered almost entirely by rain forest that provided the people with game from wildlife, building materials and clear water.

Over the years, the people squandered the natural resources by overuse, mismanagement and greed. After more than 300 years of Spanish colonial rule, rain forest still covered about 70 percent of the country. After some time, Cebu, Bohol, Panay and other Visayan islands became badly deforested. Vast areas of Luzon and Mindanao also lost a lot of their forests. In 1982, old-growth rain forest had declined to 6.6 percent and was estimated to have further dropped to 3 percent in 1997. Heaney said the Philippines' forest decline from 70 percent to 3 percent in less than a century "is probably the most rapid and severe in the world."

Now we are literally reaping the whirlwind of that overuse, mismanagement, corruption and greed. The nation is experiencing worse floods and droughts, massive erosion, loss of topsoil, landslides, silted streams, coral reef and mangrove destruction, groundwater depletion and the near extinction of endangered flora and fauna. All because of severe deforestation.

Alarmed by the death and destruction caused by floods and landslides in Eastern Visayas and Southern Luzon, President Aquino has ordered a ban on the cutting and harvesting of timber. But it is not enough to have a moratorium on logging. A massive, nationwide reforestation program has to be undertaken to reverse the alarming slide of the country to severe deforestation.

The President has ordered the creation of an Anti-Logging Task Force to enforce the moratorium. But the government forces are terribly undermanned; the few forest rangers we have cannot adequately police large areas of forests that are the target of loggers out to make a fast buck at the expense of the environment.

The people will have to pitch in and help enforce the ban on logging. They can do what some groups in Bukidnon did many years ago: stop the loggers who cut down trees and even lie down in the path of trucks carrying the logs down to the plains. Or do what some grassroots organizations are doing: tree spiking, which is simply driving nails into the trunks of trees, destroying the latent chainsaws and making it extremely dangerous for loggers to cut down trees. Concerted effort by government and the people should effectively stop deforestation.

Crying men

LAST WEEK people attending the Senate hearings and watching television saw the spectacle of grown men crying, wiping away tears and later embracing in commiseration. Never mind former state auditor Heidi Mendoza crying during her testimony before the Senate blue ribbon committee. She is, as some people would say, a woman, and she is entitled to a good cry because of fear and frustrations, and probably also relief because she is no longer alone in bearing the heavy secret of corruption in the Commission on Audit.

But grown men shedding tears? That's something not ordinary in our macho culture. But retired Col. George Rabusa and Lt. Col. Antonio Lim, his former assistant at the budget department of the AFP general headquarters, were not ashamed to shed tears at the Senate blue ribbon committee hearing.

Humans are the only species that shed tears emotionally. Psychologist L. Bindahan, who conducted a research on crying with his colleagues in 2006, said that crying is often the result of feelings of sadness and frustration. In the cases of Mendoza, Rabusa and Lim, crying released their tensions and feelings of fear and frustration. In the case of Rabusa and Lim, their shedding of tears and hugging at the end of their testimony served to strengthen the bond between them.

But really the revelations coming out of the Senate inquiry are enough to make grown men cry—no, not just grown men, but an entire nation, cry. While millions of their countrymen are going hungry, many generals are living at the lap of luxury, enjoying tens of millions of pesos in taxpayers' money that they received in the form of "pasalubong" and "pabaon."

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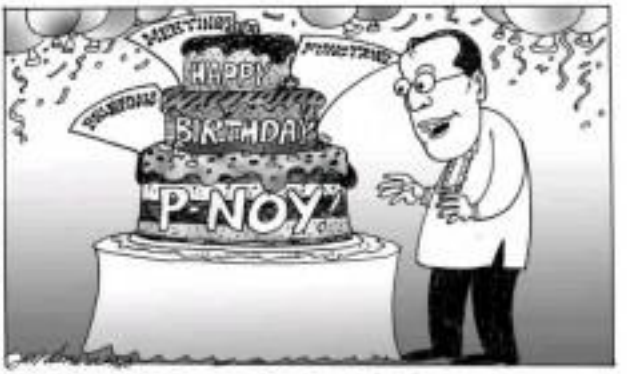

Democratic red ink

VIEWPOINT

Juani L. Mercado

ACCORD called blackened Cairo just days after the "Battle of the Camels" turned counter and TV audiences worldwide. Amidst casualty and horror, pro-government videos galloped into dedicated cards massed in Tahrir Square, hailing our rich ships and lady.

Pitcher towards, a Gandhi-like powerful protest continued into a bloody melee. It had all elements of breaking news: gore, fury, screams of fear.

Beyond since then ago former a long-term war: Can People Power III as embedded "democratic deficit"? Cyberspace media fully broken this line as the volatile region.

Mainstream press seem to contend with its own as they harvest deeper seeing of revenues. The United Nations' Arab Fears Human Development Report describes the Khartoum civil rule:

"There are vivid contrasts between retired presidents and retired regimes of democracy, between rights and violations..."

Middle-party systems operate in Algeria, Yemen and Jordan. Lebanon and Morocco put much room for political pluralism. Unless Qatar and United Arab Emirates are up superannuated second class. Bahrain has an elected parliament.

"The years of democratic reforms ... has been offset by counter-measures favoring citizens' rights... Reforms have not changed the structural functions even. The executive branch still dominates, unchecked by any form of accountability."

What freedom Iraq's new constitution gave, with its left hand, is snatched back by the right hand of executive powers. Elections of the governorates were called a fiasco in Basra. Egypt: "Can we be Free."

Except for Libya, Arab states permit civil organizations but have forbid their activities. "Notable patterns are evident in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and United Arab Emirates."

Despite censorship, Arab universe haven't been able to completely suppress reports of "pro-modern coup d'etats" or "revolts from below."

Move on Libya 1986 spilled across borders. Lebanon's Cedar Revolution expelled Syrian troops. Gaddafi's Mirror Uprising. Hussein's Orange Revolution and Georgia's Rose Revolution got real resistance.

These stoked Arab expression "to breathe free." But "more power to the people" expression stretched the elite resilience. "Boss" "I'll try my standard: the enormous strain and control has strained by oil. The political economic effects the state to mediate itself through the ever-rising percentage payments and corruption systems legitimate... For executive continue all... freedom. Elements and Tunisia emerges and arguably plays a similar role... The business sector is weak, as a civil society."

Contrary to the trend elsewhere, "Arab states show clear signs of in-depth democratization. Consequently, few Arabs feel they have the power to change system conditions in their country through public participation."

This was until Tunisian napped them for name Revolutions.

The region's first-ever successful revolt came October first Ali, he rule the "Fourth Shame of the Arab world") and its once-pulsing.

This triggered questions. As in Russian Europe, would Middle Race autocratic regimes topple like dominoes? Or was the Arab Spring?

Quicky bets appeared. Bookmakers said Hussni's president. "Ex. Ex. Host." Arabian King Abdullah bought in a new government. Bloom Bloomsuk says he will put up the ex-president's mansion in Riyadh for sale.

If Mubarak's regime folds, it would "feel the effect into the region has entered a new era of People Power," writes Roger Hardy, Middle East analyst in the Woodrow Wilson Center. "For Arab regimes, it's equally a warning on the wall in a far more dramatic way than the fall of the first 86 regimes in Tunisia... But this is no Arab spring."

Egyptians serving them as Mubarak have recessed interest investors on basic issues that lead at this region-wide unrest, poverty, hunger, epidemics and lack of freedom.

Layman's editorial "Egypt on Aid" thus called attention to former UN Undersecretary General Shashi Tharoor's observation that Russia's and Egypt's biggest failure "can not have been their repressive systems but their failed economics."

Lord through the UN's latest Human Development Index. This group measures well-being, not just from income but also from life expectancy, education and schooling. There were indications featured in the 2011 HDR: extreme deprivation, gender and vulnerability.

On the scale is among the top 20 countries within the "very high human development" category. Tunisia was the 56th, Libya 64th and Egypt at 113. Qatar and Bahrain, 36 and 50, respectively.

Here and worst made it to the second block on Bureau, 46th and fourth in Africa. Its ave-ranked countries: Tunisia and Algeria. Libya followed at 70, while Tunisia is at 81 and Algeria at 84.

HDI's damning portrait has a painful details. When we did other poor age under play in "Days of Rage"? Has Egypt's uprising become a more urgent, a Facebook or Twitter revolution?

Stanford University's Eugene Rhoades Archer A. 1945 4 percent of Egyptians have pursued computers and 17 percent are on the Internet.

But 66 out of every 100 Egyptians have cell phones in hard fame. In 2010, Filipinos were free to wage a revolution with the then-new cell phone. They mobilized like 2 through cell phones.

Are Arab states closing the "democratic deficit" swiftly enough to prevent more "Battle of the Camels" in the future? The next uprising or vast-angle gets hour of the current.

Email: juanlmercado@gmail.com

Count me in

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiroz

THE 'ANG' a hour-running pursuer of libertarian Mendoza in the middle of a noise barrage in front of the doors de Manila covering a placard that said, "We support Heidi Mendoza." Mendoza, a battery professor of that school, is Heidi's husband.

One is tempted to say this in spite of being ex, his professions of fresh and solidarity are not just personal, they are social. But I don't know how the ex-bloggers-in-the-personal is in this case. It is the family history of that valiant the brave of the kind of overcome decision, to know action. Heidi took. Mercado and Heidi are the parents of three children. Heidi's decision to expose the pillage wrought by Cuchi-cuchi, a.k.a. Heidi's boss, is not just personal. It isn't a routine military execution but the Gloria administration could expose his family to all sorts of threats and reprisals. The children above all, which makes everybody in all. That Mercado is a professor, positioning for support and admiration and love for his partner and fellow warrior in life before the world, gives transcendent dimensions.

The second implications are of course patent. Heidi has done a public service in no hyphen, noblest, self-sacrificing from. Mercado do himself puts it true. "The fight is not here alone, it is every Filipino's. Pulling weeds." Preferable is often forced to simplify. Like the narrative in a game should.

It makes me appreciate all the more when Jun Lozada did not too long ago, and wonder why no news accorded him the accolades due him then. Or indeed he was ignored, he tried to pass as the driven money to fit his own ambition. He was the fellow Ronnie Dee called in as "mediocre the proud," to ordain the just hound relates to bestir the Gentle, who valued moderation, might have approved of Boy 2 was still gated, however undeserved, and he was put 'if it. Additionally, arguable he cutting me was not entirely voluntary, it was the product of many impacts. He had been placed in a compromising position by his friend in power.

Those things did not make his decision any less hard, or heroic. When the choice is between being rewarded like Benjamin Abalos, Jose Velarde, Mike Defensor and Joseph Estrada or you joined 'em, and to be kidnapped again, harassed or harassed if you tried to kick 'em, none of us would choose to join 'em. Love me forget. Lozada made that choice in the pit of his soul's agony, which is not quite the same that choice in the pit of the Marcos regime. And he paid the price in terms of having classified of guilt courts hauled his only and taking refuge for years in the magnificent haven known as Camp Crame RIP.

George Rabusa's closer to Lozada in this respect. Like Lozada, he will always be weighed down by the public procurement class for some of the "pasalubong" that he received, and he may unfortunately because he is dark and reckless he will soon be judged by supreme higher than the court of discomfort.

None of these makes his decision any less hard or heroic either. The military's old hard-ass thing to back, not just because it suits the guns but because it helps around a culture that can be so mean as it is lucky at its best, the culture of "washing your own" means the parents, as in unity, it means don't worry, you'll get your share in the esteemed-delivered hands your life. As in Sen. challenging an officer, "All right, the?" means treating him to still the mouth as in street, it means civilians keeping on. It tells you on your own. As in love, besides to the chain of command means discipline, as in

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room, it means Malacañang comes.

But all this only makes Mendoza stand heads and shoulders above the others. Like Rabusa, she has values on the military, and probably represents most of a threat to it, being his former wife, parliamentarian and professor above her count-level rank.

Unlike Rabusa—and Lozada—she is not a party to the crime. She has never been involved in the rip-off the has uprooted, she has never benefited from any of the graft she has exposed. She does not need to apologize for past transgressions, she does not need to plea bargain with government for immunity in exchange for testimony. She was on the opposite side of the fence. She placed her life on the line all would come to light. Today to-day.

And unlike Rabusa—and Lozada—she did not have to choose between right and wrong, she was not placed in a situation where she had to choose between right and wrong, she was not placed in a situation where she had to choose forward steps she had nothing to lose but her life. Mendoza did not need to choose between right and wrong. Mendoza did not need to, but she had to anyway...flailed upon by the most obdurate, the most inscrutable, president of them all: conscience.

More power of an ex-ex for what the hit done? Rare we have to be in the brain dangers, not to whom you're breaking wrought to in. How many of us could have looked at him formidable the enemy one, and gone on to do what she did anyway? How many of us could have looked at him, silence the prisoner you, and gone on to do what she did anyway? How many of us would have looked at our children, as the scary persons we were discouraging them to and the monsters that we were pointing for, for them, and gone on to do what she did anyway?

I don't know if I could have done what she did. All I know is that I can do the next best thing, which is to keep her in my prayers and literally crying tears. Support Heidi Mendoza!

Count me in.

A word for the young

NOEL PRESIDENTIAL! Nunez appointed as an education's chief development planner nearly two decades ago. I was under 40 and was the youngest member of his Cabinet. Half jokingly and somewhat defensively, I used to tell my audiences then that Nunez must have seen wisdom in appointing a young person like me to lead the work of planning for the nation's future. I would still be around to directly enjoy the eventual consequences of a land that I was to help it positively to enjoy the fruits of a good life. Thus, I reasoned, it was a good idea to have the planning of our future in the young, the "successor generation" who will directly reap the benefits of doing it well. An older person would not have as much direct stake in the success or failure of his or her efforts.

At the time, I also found myself selling such issues, quite half jokingly, that I had grown up on the current generation of grown-ups to change their ways towards a better future for all of us. Instead, I would rather focus my energies and public attention on our children and youth, still ideals- as such as applied by the evil ways of the world, to bring us to that brighter future we all long for. I argued then, as I continue to argue now, that children and youth are the most open to new ideas and processes and meaningful role in development issues ways, teaming with planning itself. Too often, we had to realize that young people are the most powerful agents of change in our society. And the earlier we can help them develop themselves in this change that will shape society's future in they take over from the previous generation. Even before then, they can also be best means for changing present day ways of thinking and behaving in our homes and communities. Children are the most receptive to learning

Cashing in on hedonism

MANILA ARCHBISHOP Cardinale Cardinal Rosales hailed Hollywood for promoting a hedonistic culture, in a slight, but only a serious sense. ("Cardinal Jim Hollywood hedonism," Inquirer, 1/23/11)

It is the economic system, whereby giant corporations control the human and natural resources of the world, that creates the artificial, individualistic and consumerist culture we perceive and advance their business interests.

A consumerist mindset, seeks to buy and own the most visible products in the market. Media package these products as "needs," to strengthen their sale point to the clients. Accordingly, the individual's material possessions are considered with the self, unmindful of what happens to society people and the environment. This is good for business for it encourages material accumulation and discourages the sense of collectivity and thus helping to one another.

One of the biggest conglomerates, Universal Electric (GE), holds substantial interests in NBC Universal and Telemundo, Universal Pictures, Focus Features, several television stations in the United States and cable networks. Aside from its core business of energy, technology, GE's revenue ranges from appliances and lighting to finance services, to the manufacture of military equipment (F-16 Fighter Jet, Abrams tank, Apache helicopter, El Bomber), and numerous others).

Owners of media networks in the Philippines also have interlocking business interests in the country. This limits economic aspect

away towards as policies, easily making them public for struggles or long-term orders.

Culture is the creation not only of the present, it is also the remnant of the past. For example, during the Spanish colonial period, the priests destroyed our native culture and replaced them with religious images with others of European origin. Perhaps, it is also interesting to do so with the popularity of our television shows and some-life jobs? The other point here is that, while the good bishop declares that "man was created in order to image the goodness and love of God," it is also true that the image of God was created by man.

The most positive aspect of Archbishop Bacani' statement is that it is a recognition of the power of art and media in building culture. It is hoped that the Filipino administrators learn this, and begin to use the media to help our people and give entertainment culture with a sustainable and one inspiration times.

—JULIE L. PO,
Lingap sa Mahirang Pilipino,
jlp7913@yahoo.com

Yes, Gov. Cagas, Bedolido was a magazine editor

IN THE spirit of fairness, and on behalf of my clients the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) Davao Chapter and the family of Jose Bedolido, I would like to offer to refute the allegation made by Gov. Douglas Cagas in his letter titled "Bedolido not Gov Cagas' enemy" (Inquirer, 1/20/11).

Governor Cagas, who in one of the respondents in the murder case Bedolido v. Tinsman, et al., alleged that:

"Let the data dictate the accuser's recipients, Bedolido was never an editor of any newspaper, especially not the Digos Times or the Davao Times Week..."

Wouldn't you, on Jan. 20, 2011, in a television interview, Governor Cagas stated that Bedolido was not a mass-line journalist nor involved in the media sector.

Most unfortunately for Governor Cagas, evidence abounds that the people—and the documentary evidence we have submitted to the Department of Justice proves this—that Bedolido was an editor of the Bureau del Sur Times but also that he worked for Governor Cagas since the latter was the publisher of the aforementioned paper.

We submitted to the DOJ copies of the Davao del Sur Times dated Sept. 3-9, 2006, and Davao del Sur Tiboknuwak dated Jan. 28-Feb. 3, 2007, which were explicitly that Bedolido was an "Executive Editor" and the publisher of both aforementioned was none other than Governor Cagas.

Additionally we want not lose sight of the fact that the Bedolido case is a unique one because in most instances of media slayings there are no witnesses and hence it is very difficult, if not impossible, to prosecute the killers. However, in the Bedolido case the gunman himself, Salvado Mendiones, named himself over to the authorities and executed an affidavit admitting his guilt. Moreover, Mendiones has named respondent Governor Cagas as ordered him to kill Bedolido. The governor claims in his letter that he "need the political bond behind all these accusations." Again, unfortunately for him, it is difficult for any reasonable person to believe that Mendiones would admit his guilt to Bedolido's murder and name the then Governor Cagas ordered him to kill the journalist solely because of political motives.

Finally, it is imperative to stress that, ultimately the proceeding before the DOJ is a preliminary investigation for the purpose of Bedolido had not been a journalist—he might have been a lawyer, a realtor, etc.—the issue to be resolved by the DOJ is not whether Bedolido was a journalist but whether there are probable causes for the filing of those cases only now to institute the cases and to discharge from the search for justice for Bedolido and his family.

—ADEL TAMANO
Supreme Human Justice & Associates

NSC assures Tiglao, public: somebody's in charge

PLEASE ALLOW me to issue a rejoinder to the column of Rigoberto D. Tiglao titled, "No body in charge." (Inquirer, 1/27/11)

May I share the information that the Cabinet Cluster on Security, of which Secretary Jesse Robredo is chairman and yours truly is secretary has been convened on a regular basis since it was created on July 16, 2010. Several of its meetings were presided over by President Aquino himself. The cluster for the most part focused its discussions on issues related to the peace process with the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National Democratic Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The results of these discussions have been manifested in various pronouncements made by the presidential adviser on the peace process and the chairman of the panel of the two government panels negotiating with the MILF and MILF. Other equally important security issues, which included the recent bombing of a bus in Isles, were also in the agenda, including non-traditional security concerns.

Just assure Tiglao that I have made myself available to the media on various occasions, usually through interviews, in matters that directly concern the security of the country. If I missed those interviews, I would gladly make myself available to him to clarify issues affecting national security.

I hope that this information will reassure the general public that the concerned agencies and the government are addressing the festering state duties to ensure the welfare and well-being of the Filipino people.

—CESAR P. SARIÑO JR.,
national security adviser
and cluster convener,
National Security Council,
174 Leona Road cor. San Antonio, QC

PCPR against a peaceful solution to insurgency

THE IT a reaction to the letter ("Your true causes of the insurgency," Inquirer, 1/31/11) of Nestly Saldaña, general secretary of the Protection of Church People's Response Alliance and his group doubt and editor Dylan Bayambam.

We cannot please overlook, especially Saldaña and the group that he belongs to, that we cannot even blame them for having doubts about Dylan Bayambam as everyone is always resistant to change. However, it is disheartening to know that Saldaña has such a negative presumption of Dylan Bayambam when the latter is just the product of a series of consultations and innovative workshops with representatives from civil society groups, academe, civilian and government agencies and other stakeholders, particularly the Church.

We believe that Dylan Bayambam will join initiative the services that civilian authorities must deliver as a matter of responsibility to the public. It will also refer the true causes of the people's resistance, it will instead exacerbate the ongoing suffering. We can no doubt that the military's efforts to deliver basic services and other "deliverables" when governments agencies can't do because of fear that they might be made with impact or because they can't pass through danger areas? If Saldaña thinks Dylan Bayambam will maintain the people's suffering, what exactly is recommended we do then?

The problem with Saldaña and others like him is that they condemn the AFP and its people without presenting a better solution. I challenge all those who claim to know the "true root causes of the insurgency" to present to the Filipino people their brilliant solutions. Who knows, they might (or really) solve this decades-old insurgency?

The military has remained to the bridge between the communities and the government. We make appeal sometimes to act as the conduit for change because some government agencies are hesitant to attend to the needs of our benighted communities threatened by the NPA. Our soldiers are always ready to be involved in close coordination with their development projects. It is only the CPP/NPA which fears that the government might "counter the communities" through the Dylan Bayambam, and the reason is clear: Dylan Bayambam may eventually succeed in eliminating to power because of its programs.

The campaign to win the peace, rather than simply defeating the enemy, starts here and now, with Dylan Bayambam. It is up to Saldaña's group to support or join this undertaking or to continue to be a part of the problem instead of finding the intelligent. We have had enough violence. Let us try other peaceful means to address the problem. Saldaña claims he belongs to an organization for the protection of church people's response. Ironically he doesn't see peaceful steps as a protection of church people. I suggest he is representing a good logic theology?

—COL. ANTONIO O. PARLADE JR.,
Army spokesman, chief, Public Affairs Office of the Army Chief, Philippine Army

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Assistant Editor Tony Burgonio

Across the **NATION**

Noy wants ARMM elections reset

COOLING PERIOD February always means cold mornings in Baguio City. On Feb. 3, the temperature dropped to 9.6 degrees Celsius in the city and in other parts of the Cordillera. Three children in Sagada, a tourist town in Mountain Province, would shiver in the chill.

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Aquino is asking Congress to postpone the elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) set for August as he wants to hold the political exercise simultaneously with the midterm polls in May 2013.

His spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said on Monday the Palace would ask congressional leaders to consider this proposal to be laid out in a bill, one of 17 measures that the Executive has identified as legislative priorities this year.

At a press briefing, Lacierda said the Palace had finally set the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) meeting for Feb. 28, during which the President will present the 17 priority bills.

One of the bills seek to "reset the date of the regular elections for elective officials of ARMM, synchronizing the ARMM elections with the synchronized national and local elections."

It aims to amend Republic Act No. 9333, which sets the date for the ARMM elections this August.

According to Lacierda, the Palace proposed the elections for the ARMM governor, vice governor and members of the regional legislative assembly on the second Monday of May and they elected officials will hold office for a term of three years.

Incumbent elective officials will hold office only until Sept. 30 this year, he said.

"The President shall appoint officials to discharge until the successors shall have been elected and qualified," Lacierda said.

He said the OICs would be "ineligible" to run in the next elections. He explained that the "whole idea was to come up with a better system of governance" in the ARMM.

"So, you need people who have no political ambitions," he added.

Asked why they would want synchronized elections, Lacierda said that aside from "maximizing efficiency and saving on the cost of elections," there was also the aim to "prevent the abuses in the past."

Noting how elections in the region had been "manipulated a number of times in the past," Lacierda said Malacañang would want to prevent the use of "command votes" there.

"We want to discuss everything; we want to prevent a system where the ARMM is a region where one will run if he wants to win—this is something that has been going on for the longest time," he said.

"We want to make sure that the ARMM will also be a place where you can vote and his vote will be counted and not a place where, during polls, rebels will just use that as a point where you can buy votes."

Lacierda cited Secretary Leo Amoranto of the Malacañang Management Assistant Staff as saying that the stakeholders in initial talks were "open" to the idea of postponing the ARMM polls and holding it with the midterm polls.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ NAGA CITY

38 boarding houses razed

A 40-MINUTE fire believed to have been caused by a lighted candle left by a boarder razed 38 boarding houses, residential homes and small stores in Magsaysay Street, Barangay Abella.

The victims were mostly students enrolled in universities around the area, said city fire marshal Achilles Santiago.

He said the fire, which started at 4:50 a.m. and put under control at 6:01 a.m., was limited to wood two-storey wooden structures where electricity was cut off due to unpaid bills.

Jhimo Baccaninda,
Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ CITY OF MALOLOS

Bliss Ople Day

If NAFLU-Bliss Ople Day, and Bulacan officials credited the labor union activists and member for the numerous benefits provided by overseas Filipino workers at a Thursday ceremony.

Gov. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado said a wreath before Ople's monument to remember his 68th birthday.

Sy-Alvarado said this country lacks Ople today because the economy grows stronger each year in the OFW remittances.

Ople, who was born on Feb. 3, 1931, has a poor family in Aparri, Cagayan, and up the Bureau of Employment Services at the then Ministry of Labor and Employment that became the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. He died on 2003.

Cornelio Reyes-Galvez,
Inquirer Central Luzon

■ ABRA

Teacher found dead

A PART TIME radio announcer and college instructor was found dead in his room at a boarding house in Barangay Barbangan in Bangued town on Jan. 31, a local police report said.

The body of Cirilo Gallardo, 38, had 13 stab wounds, police said.

Investigators considered robbery as the most likely motive for the killing. Gallardo's room was ransacked, they said.

Among the items missing were his cadhia and a backpack.

Gallardo, a native of Tayum town, was a civics society of radio station dwDF and faculty member of the Divine Word College of Vera.

Desiree Caluza,
Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ CAMIGUIN, MAMBAJAO

Cattle rustler killed

POLICE on Friday engaged a suspected cattle-rustling gang in a gun battle at a cattle farm in Barangay Guiburay.

The gang's leader, Ernesto Aquino alias Ernong, and another officer, SPO2 Reynaldo Laggan, were killed.

The daughter of a farm worker, identified only as Vilma, was wounded.

Five gang members were arrested.

Police said Aquino had been pointing cases of cattle rustling and theft.

Senior Supt. Jimmy Rivera Sr., provincial police director, said Aquino also led the group that ambushed a police team on June 6 last year. Two police officers, Insp. Jaybeth Antonio and PO2 Jaime Mandigal Jr., were killed in that attack.

Ellaine Dizon-Jr.,
Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ DUBAI

Golden reunion

THE PILLARS Lions Metro Manila Retirees Association (PLIONMRA) will celebrate its 10th anniversary on Feb. 27 at Emirates Sports Center Multipurpose Hall on Sonol Dhaidan St., Nasar District, Garhoud City.

Association president Antonio Kalaw Jr. and board chair Jess Bartolo urged Filipinos now in Metro Manilato take part in the reunion which will be attended by 44 new members.

The celebration will be held immediately at the "Kapistahan ng Sto. Niño" in Villaba, Leyte, on any last Sundays of February.

The program project will start at 1 p.m. followed by a traditional dance known as "Lantoka." Leyte Rep. Andres D. Salvacion Jr. (third district) will be guest speaker.

CLARK AIRPORT ROW

Firm says Noy ally's charges 'false, baseless'

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—A firm that cried foul for the development of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) here said it had nothing to do with a new proposal submitted by a former company official in relation to the airport project.

In a statement, lawyer Marvin Aurora, corporate secretary of Pacific Asia Strategy Inc. (Pasi), described the allegations by Ricardo Puno, Pasi's former chair and current chair of the Filipino-Korean consortium, Philtic Asia, that Pagi and other former business partners took his money as "completely false and baseless."

"The bottom line is that, all insinuations/innuendos of Pagi and [associates Ramon Jr.] Puno's proposal to develop DMIA was declined," Aurora said.

Pagi's proposal, evaluated by Clark International Airport Corp. (CIAC) in 2009, was rejected.

Its president is Maria Aurora "Nana" Ocon, chairman Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and vice chairman Ben Tiu. Tonie Dieta, Nonoi is a younger brother of Margarita Juico, chair of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Present Bank Wahas Arm whose proposal to develop the DMIA was accepted by CIAC in May 2010.

But in a resolution on Jan. 12, the joint venture selection committee (JVSC) advised the CIAC board to end the detailed negotiations with Philtic first because of, among other things, the removal of a $7.9-million offer to develop a 20-hectare commercial property and supposed inconsistencies in technical designs.

"Pagi has nothing to do whatsoever with this second proposal of Mr. Nonoi, Dan. Dieta is no legal figure at all as regards DMIA Terminal 2 between Pagi and Nonoi," Aurora said.

He nullified the case for syndicated estafa against Ocon and other people, in which Pasi can only be less about 300 million pesos, because Pimentel had brought this to the Department of Justice.

Aurora said Pagi led a consortium that was set up in 2006 to design, build, operate and maintain the DMIA's Terminal 2.

"Precisely with CIAC will show that Pagi submitted all the necessary eligibility documents which were evaluated by CIAC. After several meetings, CIAC informed Pagi that they were to entertain other proposals. Pagi then decided to wait for whatever was to be declared original proponent and submit a Swiss challenge in accordance with the joint venture guidelines," he said.

"To date, CIAC has yet to declare any group as original proponent, for which we are still open even after the release of a video showing him admitting top leaders of the MILF for abandoning the group's stance of independence and of him hoodwinking them out," Ebrahim said.

The MILF chair said Iqbal was being reassigned from a military command to a political one, citing his old age. Kato is in his 70s, he said.

Kato, who heads about 1,000 fighters under his command, has formed the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), which, according to Ebrahim, is demanding an independent—not just an autonomous—state within the MILF.

Frustrations

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF information officer, described Kato's criticisms as frank expression of their frustrations over the protracted peace negotiations with the government.

"We are very positive we can resolve this problem," Iqbal said.

In an article published in the MILF website, www.luwaran.com, Muhammad Ramon, chair of the MILF secretariat, stated that the MILF leadership, in the conduct of struggle and negotiations, was still following the ideological and political framework of the late Salamat Hashim in the Bangsamoro Mujahid," written by the late MILF founder Salamat Hashim.

The book was originally published in Lahore, Pakistan, but was reprinted several times in Mindanao after Hashim returned in 1997. Hashim has been recognized as the foremost ideologue of the MILF.

Ameen Landod, ag Ebrahim's statement that Kato was not stripped of his command but voluntarily resigned, crying out against Kato's statement that the MILF leadership had lost its soul.

Kato joined the MILF in 1995 five years after Hashim's relative from Pakistan in 1987. He was a graduate of an Islamic studies course from the Riyadh Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

He served as one of the instructors to students (Asatidz asharia) in Camp Omar, where he had lectured on Shariah law to teachers of the Shariah bar exam.

Independent probe

Ebrahim said the MILF had "doubted the independence of Nur to but could not yet divulge the results as those might jeopardize an ongoing independent probe. It also requested from the International Monitoring Team (IMT) led by Malaysia.

Kato's latest open letter chair of a number of abuses he leading attacks on civilian villages in Central Mindanao in 2008 after the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a government proposal for a Bangsamoro homeland, in support of a package with the MILF. Several people were killed in the attacks.

'SATO' ISSUE

MILF leaders assert control despite strife

By Ruelle Z. Zurio
Inquirer Mindanao

SULTAN KUDARAT, Maguindanao—Leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have acknowledged that the rebel group is facing internal problems but stressed that it is "in total and effective control of its military and political arms."

MILF Chair Murad Ebrahim said the problem involving himself Ebrahim Kato, who commands the 105th front, was "manageable and can be resolved anytime." He met with journalists at the MILF's Camp Darapanan here.

Communication lines with Kato are still open even after the release of a video showing him admitting top leaders of the MILF for abandoning the group's stance of independence and of him hoodwinking them out, Ebrahim said.

The MILF chair said Kato was being reassigned from a military command to a political one, citing his old age. Kato is in his 70s, he said.

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In an article published in the MILF website, www.luwaran.com, Muhammad Ramon, chair of the MILF secretariat, stated that the MILF leadership, in the conduct of struggle and negotiations, was still following the ideological and political framework of the late Salamat Hashim in the Bangsamoro Mujahid," written by the late MILF founder Salamat Hashim.

The book was originally published in Lahore, Pakistan, but was reprinted several times in Mindanao after Hashim returned in 1997. Hashim has been recognized as the foremost ideologue of the MILF.

Ameen Landod, ag Ebrahim's statement that Kato was not stripped of his command but voluntarily resigned, crying out against Kato's statement that the MILF leadership had lost its soul.

Kato joined the MILF in 1995 five years after Hashim's relative from Pakistan in 1987. He was a graduate of an Islamic studies course from the Riyadh Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

He served as one of the instructors to students (Asatidz asharia) in Camp Omar, where he had lectured on Shariah law to teachers of the Shariah bar exam.

Independent probe

Ebrahim said the MILF had "doubted the independence of Nur to but could not yet divulge the results as those might jeopardize an ongoing independent probe. It also requested from the International Monitoring Team (IMT) led by Malaysia.

Kato's latest open letter chair of a number of abuses he leading attacks on civilian villages in Central Mindanao in 2008 after the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a government proposal for a Bangsamoro homeland, in support of a package with the MILF. Several people were killed in the attacks.

HUMAD EBRAHIM, chair of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, talks with armed escorts inside the rebel group's Camp Darapanan in Barangay Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. AUDREY MORALES/INQUIRER

4 rebels killed as fighting continues in N. Cotabato

By Edmir O. Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—Four more rebels and two civilians, including a child, were killed as sporadic fighting between units of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) over a land dispute continued in Kabacan town in North Cotabato.

Quoting civilians near the battlefront, Supt. Joseph Estrellanes, Kabacan police chief, said the bodies of at least four rebels were carried by their comrades at the border of Barangays Nasapian and Simone.

The municipal social welfare officer, Susan Mandar, said the two civilians were inside an evacuation site and so far they believe.

Estrellanes, police and military authorities reported that at least 15 rebels from both the MILF and the MNLF had died since fierce fighting erupted on Jan. 11 or shortly after a truce was signed among the four rebel groups and Misuari's chairman Nur Misuari, leaders of factional in Barangay Simone, Tumpod and Simbahay.

"They started shooting at each other again, using high-powered firearms," Estrellanes said in a radio interview.

"They used mortars at first at day time when some rank-and-file can retain to their communities to salvage valuables," he said. He said sniper fire usually occurred early morning and at dawn.

Where the MILF regulations meet with their government counterparts on Feb. 9 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Ebrahim said the main agenda would no longer be the ancestral domain. "We'll go directly to the compact on transitional," he said.

One of the issues that the rebels will raise in the talks is the release of 25 Moro political detainees.

Bill seeks to open Sierra Madre forests to mining

By Melvin Gascon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

SAN MATEO, Isabela—Rep. Rodolfo Albano is crying foul over the provisions of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP) as preserved areas and open them to mining operations.

House Bill No. 2899 seeks to cut some 31,271 hectares of the Sierra Madre Natural Park in Baggao and Peñablanca towns in Isabela to be reclassified as "mineral land open for exploration, development and utilization of mineral deposits."

It aims to amend Republic Act Nos. 9126 and 7586, which established the NSMNP and the National Integrated Protected Area System (Nipas), respectively, that declared the forests of the Sierra Madre protected areas.

"In accordance with a declared policy that it is the responsibility of the state to promote the national exploration, development, utilization and conservation of mineral resources ... it is therefore that a parcel of land be excluded from the coverage of the Nipas Act and the NSMNP Act and reclassified as mineral land," the bill said.

Signed into law in 2001, RA 9125 created the NSMNP, which declared 357,461 ha of land and 71,025 ha of marine areas in the Sierra Madre mountain range as protected areas.

The NSMNP has been included in the tentative list of the United Nations' World Heritage Convention (UNWHC) for possible declaration as a natural heritage site in 2012. The largest protected area in the country and the richest in terms of genetic, species and habitat diversity."

The park is home to endangered species such as the Philippine eagle (Pithecophaga jefferyi), golden-crowned flying fox (Acerodon jubatus), Philippine eagle-owl (Bubo philippensis), Isabela oriole (Oriolus isabellae), kagu-head turtle (Cuora cousineri), Philippine crocodile (Crocodylus mindorensis) and dugong (Dugong dugon), the UN-WWC said.

But the law that Albano is proposing revokes Congress' power to modify its boundaries and reclassify protected areas as public forests, after a study by and on recommendation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

According to the website of the House of Representatives, the bill was filed on Sept. 6, 2010. The committee on environment is set to hold a public hearing on Wednesday, days after President Aquino ordered a country-wide moratorium on logging and a suspension of all mining applications.

Albano, 3rd district Rep. Antonio Floro Tango Kalbasan (TK), a nongovernment organization that has been waging a campaign against illegal logging and carrying out reforestation programs in the northern Sierra Madre.

Glenn Soriano, TK program director, called the proposed measure a "blatant disregard [of the people's] ecological rights."

"To allow mining in these areas is to allow them to ... cut [trees] as a mining permit carries with it timber rights. This is in effect giving out timber and the loss of our communities first, on a other planet, to the miners. This should be stopped," Soriano said in a statement.

Using the land reordinance described in Albano's bill, a map drawn by the Mabuwaras Foundation, which is working for the preservation of ecosystem within the NSMNP, showed that the areas proposed to be excluded were in pristine Sierra Madre.

The largest block, covering an area of 6,238 ha, extends to the coastline of Dinibanan facing the Pacific Ocean.

The TK said large portions of the areas to be excluded are classified as "unclassified forest" or "dipterocarp" forests, which are the few remaining forests of such type in the country and which support plant and mammal species found only in the Philippines.

Soriano expressed fear over the consequences of opening the NSMNP to mining operations, citing the strong winds and flash floods that inundated and submerged northern Isabela last year. The floods were partly blamed on the massive illegal logging in the Sierra Madre.

"Dwellers of Dupes and Dicaloyan[ ] by helpless because the upland and coastal forests which should be their shield are now shrinking. To allow mining in these ... forests is a kiss of death from catastrophes to come," he said.

Rains bring floods to Capiz towns

ROXAS CITY—Rains intensified Friday night caused knee-deep flooding in barangays in several towns in Capiz.

Retired Supt. Jose Gensolor, action officer of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, said the floods occurred in Mambusao [ ] barangays], Dumarao [two barangays] and Ilaya [one barangay], and in some areas in Sapian's Poblacion and Inzo San Antonio in Tapaz.

The floodwaters subsided on Sunday afternoon, Gensolor said.

No one was reported hurt and the affected families just stayed in their homes, he said.

Flash floods also hit three towns in Capiz in the middle of January and 123 villages in December last year, Felipe Cobita, Regional Utilities

Ex-Palawan gov tagged slay brains

From page A1

Reyes' behest, he handed the plan to Bill Ortega.

Edriel also named former Marinduque Gov. Jose Antonio "Bong" Carrion, whom he had worked for as a security officer, and Reyes' younger brother Marjo, the incumbent mayor of Coron town in northern Palawan, as accessories to the crime.

Both Reyes and Carrion could not be contacted for comment despite efforts to reach them on Monday. They are out of the country, according to people asked by the investigators to help in reaching the two former officials.

Reyes, who served as Palawan governor for three terms, issued a press statement last week denying involvement in the killing.

He said he, Palawan Vice Governor Dennis Socrates and Edriel "have been long dead" if they were out to eliminate one another.

Socrates also declined to comment until Edriel's allegations in his affidavit were disclosed by the proper authorities, according to people close to him. They asked not to be named as they were not in a position to speak on her behalf.

Carrion denial

Carrion, however, pointed out in interview over ANC shortly before 6 p.m. on Monday, Reyes' alleged involvement in the crime.

Reyes ordered Ortega killed because of the latter's relentless and hard-hitting radio commentaries describing the then governor's promising policies and the misuse of millions of pesos in royalty income from the Malampaya gas field, Edriel said in an affidavit he signed on Monday at the NBI office in Manila.

The suspect was brought to the NBI office after he surrendered in Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn in the boundary of Quezon and Palawan provinces in Quezon on Saturday.

Edriel said that after the killing of Ortega and upon the instruction of Reyes, he met with Marjo in Manila where he was handed cash for P500,000. He left for his hotel, and P500,000 more was later given to three ex-officers.

VIP security escort

Carrion murdered who he was being linked to Ortega's murder case, he said, he did not even blame Ortega and had "no political interest or investments in Palawan."

He acknowledged that Edriel was once part of his security detail sometime in 2008 and until his stint as provincial administrator (late 2010) when he let go of Edriel's service as he no longer needed a security aide.

Carrion said a friend from Lucena City recommended Edriel to him, saying the latter could be trusted.

Edriel, he said, received VIP security escort training from a retired officer said to be with the Presidential Security Group.

Edriel, who disclosed that he began watching the Reyes after last year's local polls, said in his affidavit that Reyes brought up the plan to kill Ortega while they were in a shopping mall in Makati City.

December strike

Reyes had asked him if he was cold for Carrion about a plan to eliminate two individuals, Edriel said. "Kinilatgan nawalis ng hari sabit ng ulo (They have to disappear; they cause our headache)," Edriel quoted Reyes as allegedly telling him.

Edriel said Reyes wanted him to do the job in December last year in a way that he would not be implicated.

"Kailangan ay hindi ikaw ang magsasabuhin (sic) nuneuneng sila dahil nakakilos ka sa akin, ilalusaba ka ng lang ay ibang tatabihin a lang ikaw ang tumitindig (sic) kailangan hindi ka na dahilit at ako (I don't want you to do it because I will get hurt because you are close to me. Get others to do the job. If you will do it, you can't get close to me)," he quoted Reyes as saying.

Edriel said NBI investigators that Reyes gave him P400,000 for the job last December at Sir. ace World Hotel in Pasay City, and P950,000 for the purchase of a gun.

Before the former governor left the country in early January, Edriel said he met Reyes again in the latter's house in Dasmariñas Village in Makati City to receive another P500,000.

Edriel claimed that the first team of hired killers he had sent backed out, prompting him to form a new group.

3-man hit squad

Edriel said he formed a three-man hit squad with Mayor Jeremaias as the designated trigger man. The squad reportedly placed Ortega's killing the night before Jan. 19 when they tracked Dario Pagbilao (now in Quezon) to Odiongan.

Pilviga, a popular radio-commentator and environmental activist, had regularly attacked Reyes and other local government officials in his daily broadcast. He was particularly critical of how Reyes used the provincial government's share of P1.2 billion in royalty income from the Malampaya gas field.

Hagedorn, who arranged the surrender of Edriel, earlier received the suspect in saying that a second target was supposed to have been hit a week after Ortega was killed but it not been for the fact that the execution against Ortega was unsuccessfully exposed with the capture of the perpetrators and his accomplices, Dennis Aranas.

Edriel did not identify who the second target would be.

He said he had hired Buenaventura Aranas and a certain Antonio Abad (both, who is still at large, to watch on Ortega for a monthly price of P150,000. He gave them an advance of P10,000 each a day before the group ambushed in Palawan. Bato Pagbilao on Jan. 19.

Edriel, in his sworn testimony, said Reyes had told him that Reyes was going to assign him to liquidate two persons in Palawan. Edriel had earlier worked for the provincial government of Marinduque during Reyes' term as governor.

Carrion, he claimed in his affidavit, told him that Reyes would offer P400,000 to kill the two persons. He said he was willing to take it for another P100,000 or a total of P500,000.

Traced from tips

Hagedorn said Edriel was traced from tips given by several law enforcers in Palawan who were willing to testify in court during confidential dinners in the province, events that Carrion and Reyes used to regularly participate in as officials.

The mayor quoted Edriel as saying that he wanted to be convicted about his safety when he learned about the P2-million reward for the identification and capture of the mastermind in the Ortega killing.

"It was the P2-million reward money that convinced him he had nowhere to run and had nothing to do except turn himself in," he said.

Edriel decided to come out to surrender to Hagedorn with the help of his father, Rodolfo Edriel Jr., and a private lawyer, Persio Arias.

"Yesterday Arias was able to contact me through a common acquaintance, Atty. Dey Councilor Rebecca Labit, and informed me about Edriel's willingness to surrender," Hagedorn told the reporters.

Hagedorn, accompanied by agents of the NBI agents and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), met up with Edriel in Quezon for the surrender. The mayor brought the suspect to Lucena City en route to Manila on Sunday for questioning at the NBI office.

Hagedorn expressed relief at the decision of Edriel to surrender. "I can not now a little bit as I think I've been able to deliver sir, my promise over Gerry's grave that I will help bring closure to this case in a swift manner," he said.

GRUESOME: Highly critical of the former Palawan governor.

Rosales dares accusers to face him

From page A1

Agriculture Cesar Gutierrez.

Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo said he had checked with Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Emmanuel Bautista and Philippine National Police Director General Alan Purisima, and both assured him that the military and police would not be involved in the illegal activities.

"Kung may mga pulis o sundalo na involved, dapat sila ang unang-unang magsumbong sa amin (If there are policemen or soldiers involved, they should be the first to report to us)," Robredo said.

Gutierrez, for his part, said he would not tolerate any illegal activities in the bureau.

"Kung may mga ganyan, ipagbigay-alam nyo sa amin (If there are such, please inform us)," he said.

Gutierrez said he would also look into the allegations against Rosales and Supt. Napoleon Campol. "I will have them investigated," he told reporters after attending a peace and order meeting in Quezon City.

"The PNP leadership will request Director Roberto Rosales, head of the Directorate for Integrated Police Operations in Northern Luzon, and Supt. Napoleon Campol, a Five-time head of the defunct Traffic Management Group, Task Force Limbas, to shed light on the intelligence information linking them to the Dominguez-Tan theft syndicate," Cruz said in a statement.

"We have set the wheels of investigation based on the intelligence information and reports from the media," Cruz added.

"We have to weigh the available evidences then make our move based on outright duty and not rely on honesty," he added.

Jacinto declined to reveal the identity or identities of the officer or officers to be charged. "In due time rubra we have the necessary evidence we will name him. We have in the case against those responsible," he said.

'Face me like a man'

In a press conference yesterday Rosales said he had talked to PNP Director General Nael Bandoy, who told him "Boyet wasn't just (That's nothing)."

"I told Dio in very serious and I have to face this query," Rosales said.

He said that Bandoy also told him that "though this is nothing, we have to form an investigating team and they will be coordinating with the AFP on what we have said so we can hear their side."

Campol has also strongly denied any links with car theft syndicates.

At the press conference, Rosales reiterated that he was being made a "fall guy" by crime syndicates to "get rid of" that fish that's been giving them trouble, like a big boss to their chairman."

"You are like a man and answer your charges," he called unsubstantiated report in person," he said.

"Together with your co-heirs, let us face the music; getting body of the executive and legislative branches of government and all the quasi-local leadership as at the issue of criminals in uniforms."

Well-entrenched

Rosales added: "Face me today. Don't hide under 'arms length.' Let's go mano-a-mano and bring out the truth, no matter who gets hurt in your eyeglasses."

The big-time carnival over the weekend the story about the intelligence report alleging that Rosales and Campol were coddling the Dominguez gang, which has been accused killing car dealer Antson Evangelista. The story, written by correspondent Allyn dela Cruz, also named the two officers' details.

Besides said that in the course of his career he had acquired many persons after he had "neutralized their technical abilities."

"Probably, or it seems I am sure, that he (who leaked the report) is one among the cut-napping syndicates. It is he himself who is the member. That is why he is diverting our attention," Rosales said.

He said officials involved in the syndicates were "well-entrenched."

He dispelled suggestions that the controversy was intended with "political color," or intended to destabilize the present administration. He said the Aquino administration enjoyed popular support and destabilize it would be "political suicide."

Rosales is a member of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1979 which had adopted former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as a member.

Standing by story

Rosales said he was still thinking of legal moves or rules against those who started the smear campaign. "And also against the newspaper (*Si gayon din sa pahayagan*)," But he admitted he has yet to hire a lawyer.

While being interviewed by the media after his initial press conference, Rosales confronted Dela Cruz.

"When you did it (sic, supposedly I tell you, you destroyed me," an emotional Rosales said. He said the things that came out to the report "were malicious, untruthful, deceitful, unverified."

Rosales said Dela Cruz should initiate moves to verify her report. "Otherwise, you will receive censure from (the) PNPM."

Dela Cruz stood by her story.

"I still stand by my story. It's not (untrue) (a false report). There is a report that exists. There is a hard copy," she told reporters who sought her comment if report that a cover supposed to close me."

The Quezon City Police District Director, Chief Supt. Benjamin Rhamin, said he did not believe the allegations linking Rosales to the Dominguez car theft gang.

"I know General Rosales to be a good person," Rhamin told reporters in Camp Karingal.

Rhamin said his office's investigation of the Dominguez car theft gang would be based "on evidence," and that so far, he had not seen anything to support the allegation against Rosales. With reports from Jhesa Ilagan and Kello Aurelio

FACE-OFF: PNP Director Roberto Rosales shakes hands with reporter Allyn dela Cruz who wrote the story that he was allegedly coddling car thieves. Rosales held a press conference yesterday in Camp Crame in an his side on the issue.

No more free DOH condoms on Valentine's

From page A1

"Be careful on Feb. 14 ... Enjoy it with your wife or husband," the said in a press briefing. "Have sex, but only with your wife or husband ... Avoid sex if not married."

For spouses only

The DOH is promoting abstinence and monogamy to help curb the growing number of HIV and AIDS cases in the country.

One reminded Filipinos of the importance of safe sex and to be aware of the dangers of HIV and AIDS.

"I'm addressing this to everybody: What is really important is that sex is really between that one loved only have sex with (his/her) husband," he said.

"Why if this activity is consensual that there is no courage that we have to control and therefore, are you judgment if and when tonight."

The human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, leads to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), a condition in which the body's immune system is affected and damaged by the virus, ultimately causing death.

123 deaths

Last year alone, the DOH National Epidemiology Center officially logged 1,591 HIV cases, bringing the number of infections since to 9,216 since the virus was first detected in the Philippines in 1984.

Since 1984, the DOH has recorded 123 deaths due to AIDS. At least two deaths were reported from January to December last year.

The National Center for Disease Prevention and Control last year staged a condom-giving campaign, dubbed "Be My Valentine, Ingat Lagi." It embarked awareness to the perils of unprotected sex, and not as a family planning method.

The Catholic Church branded the stunt as "vulgar and gross."

Fidelity, not condom

Fr. Melvin Castro, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission on Family and Life, supported the CBCP's plan to scrap the campaign on Valentine's Day this year.

"The number of HIV cases is increasing because they are giving young people a false sense of security by distributing condoms," Castro said.

He said giving away condoms was one way of enticing young people to be experimental and promiscuous. "In the end, a change in attitude and behavior towards sex will help bring down the prevalence of HIV," he said.

Castro said that instead of condom use, marital fidelity and abstinence among unmarried users should be promoted by the government.

Tropang Texters, Bucal head Forum guests

THE ROOKIE-LED Talk 'N Text team and the national University Bulldogs will attend the Forum on the today's semestral Sports Forum at Shakey's in Ayala Avenue. The Tropang Texters' rookie coach Chot Reyes will discuss their plans after winning the PBA Philippine Cup title, while NU athletic director Jose Bucal and coach Jong Uichico's offseason will occupy the Bulldogs' mother hen. FOR DAVAO. Pressed practice-over ICM Sports Field at Ecoland presented by Dahlia Battery, Tagcor and Shakey's.

14 teams eyeing PBA D-League stint

FOUR TEAMS MORE, led by Mauralee and Basic Pacific Tollways, are included in the pool of the PBA Developmental League (D-League) set to unfold March 16. The three conference teams in the previous Foster's Cup, Alaska, AC Boracay, Filoil Balmaceda-led, Hotshots-led Rossi, and PCL Pacific Pipes, Iron Blinds, Cebuana Lhuillier and Toyota Otis, PBA media has been cited while the deadline for the final filing of teams is on Feb. 28.

James Piccayo

SPORTS

Busy P-Noy gives Pinoys' Mongolia match a miss

THE MONGOLIA squad were invited at the Nick championship

By Cedelf P. Tupas

MACOLOD CITY—Citing more pressing concerns, President Aquino has begged off from attending the first leg of the AFC Challenge Cup qualifying match between the Philippines and Mongolia tomorrow night at the Panaad Stadium here.

The information was relayed to the bupon by Philippine Olympic Committee chair Jeinnie Panlilio, who said that Mr. Aquino expressed regrets for missing what is considered as the most important match in the team's history.

Panlilio, along with Philippine Sports Commission Chair Richie Garcia, had invited Aquino to see the match, which is expected to draw about 18,000 fans.

While his presence will be missed, Philippine Football Federation president Mariano "Nonong" Araneta said Mr. Aquino's inputs are all over the staging of the match.

The President, he said, gave a "substantial" amount to the organizers of the Azkals' first home game in Bacolod in five years.

The last time the Azkals played here was in 2006 when they beat Brunei, 4-1, to retain the team's supremacy of the Asean Football Federation Championship.

"President Aquino's expressed his regrets for not being able to come," Panlilio said. "The country has so many problems that he has to attend to."

A reliable source from the local organizing committee said that Mr. Aquino may be represented by elder sister Ballsy.

Speculations that the President won't come to Bacolod started to be hounded ever since the Presidential security Group has done a routine check at the Panaad.

However, Mr. Aquino's absence will not see one seventy seaters for organizers, who still display about 1,000 police and military personnel to ensure the calming venue.

Meanwhile, only 10,000 of the reserved seven seats at the Panaad should easily be filled, citing the high demand for tickets.

Araneta has allotted 3,000 general admission tickets to the host province, which means the Panaad, Several PFF executive committees will share 12,000.

PSA NIGHT

Presidential Award for bold Azkals

AUNCH OF OVERACHIEVERS: The seven-cap who national football team.

By Cedelf P. Tupas

FOR SEVERAL NIGHTS Gaea Encarnadoro, they kept the country on its feet. All, though their campaign ended in heartbreak, their performances were enough for us to engage in a sport often forgotten by Filipinos.

The Philippine team, collectively known as the Azkals, achieved a historic semifinal finish to the Asean Football Federation Suzuki Cup, the last qualifying tournament and stepping support base to the private sector for the sport.

For their exploits, the Azkals will be awarded the Presidential Achievement Award at the Philippine Sports Commission Awards Night on March 3 at the Manila Hotel.

Team manager Dan Stephen Palami, who almost singlehandedly backed the team's trade up of a handy cut of Filipinos playing in local tournaments and those scoring action in Europe, will receive the Executive of the Year award during the PSA.

PALUPO: Best executive.

Gory Gris Award Awards Night for his role in the resurgence of the Azkals.

Because of the tremendous impact of their feat, the Azkals were actually considered as 2010 Athletes of the Year, but none beaten out for the coveted award by World 9-Ball champion Francisco "Open Joe" Bustamante and the 400 of point Gomez golf medal winner Miley Rivera, Ray Saludar and Dennis Orcollo.

The Azkals thus followed the likes of boxing hero Manny Pacquiao, four-time PBA MVP Alvin Patrimonio, the 2003 world women's champion trio of Lira Del Rosario, Lisa Ortiano and Cecilia Tan, the 1960 Olympian Rose Eugkin champion team, and Sen. Manny Villar as Presidential Achievement Awardees.

How expected the Azkals to do well in the Suzuki Cup, let alone qualify for the main tournament, for a string of heroic performances and produced cheers to the semifinals for the first time in the competition's 14-year history and to fame that even the players could hardly imagine.

The Azkals' nerve-top-the-spirit was in full display in France as they defended valiantly to hold three-time champion Singapore to a 1-1 draw.

The draw that felt more like a victory served as a springboard for bigger things to come as the Azkals pulled off the most memorable biggest upset three nights later when they stunned Vietnam, 2-1, before about 40,000 fans.

The goalless stalemate against Indonesia Myanmar set the Azkals on their way to a semifinal meeting in Jakarta.

Playing two games before a crabbing atmosphere, the Azkals absorbed a couple of 1-nil defeats to Indonesia.

"The may have lost but we gained a lot of respect," said Palami.

The PSA will also honor 14 teams and individuals in major attendees, including the brother tandem of Jean Pierre and Brian Sabido along with Anthony Matias, who bagged the gold medal in the 5th PETV World Premiere meet.

The Awards Evening honors some of the Philippines will receive the National Sports Association of the Year award, while coaching legend Virgilio "Baby" Dalupan and international boxing referee Carlos Padilla Jr. are to be honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Billiards icon and the late Efren Jenbed Pinoy Caneo promoters will be enshrined in the PSA Hall of Fame.

The annual affair of the association of athletes and sportswriters from the national broadcasters and tabloids is also presented by the Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corp., San Miguel Corp., Air Asia Group, Silver Mineral Resources International Inc. and Accel.

The person to do it super full awesome
Magic Johnson 8 Mahindra Rise Urban Development Corp. editorial secretary Gamaliel Ines, editorial consultant Jaime Antonio Gomez, industry digest Antonio Arcilla, Philippine Sports Commission chairman Richie Garcia and Commissioner Jolly Gomez, pro boxing czar Sonny Angeles Gun, vice president for corporate affairs Ricky Vargas, Philippine Olympic Committee president Jeinnie Panlilio, Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corp. chairman Efren Peñaflorida, Philippine Sports Commission executive director Atty. Guillermo Iroy Jr. and Philippine Sports Commission commissioner Celia Kiram.

National lineup out; Mongolians in town

By Cedelf P. Tupas

BACOLOD CITY—German coach Hans Michael Weiss is putting a tight leash on his Azkals.

Stressing the importance of the AFC Challenge Cup duel against Mongolia, Weiss has enforced a policy limiting the Azkals' extra activities with the outside at the Panaad Stadium a day away.

"It's not a holiday or vacation resort-area camp, it's preparation for even as clear minds and we're on the verge of bringing the Philippines up to the level of the world, and that's the first start of getting more professional," Weiss said.

Team manager Dan Palami later announced the 23-man squad for the showdown with skipper Aly Borromeo leading the unit along with goalkeeper Neil Etheridge.

Except for the addition of Simon Greatwich, Jayson Salvo and Patrick Hinckhaus and the absence of Chris Greatwich, the lineup will be similar to that of the squad in the Suzuki Cup.

"The team that made history in Indonesia, they deserve to be in this match," Weiss said.

Led by head coach Federation Sandiego and assistant Bienvenido Maraño, the 22-man Mongolian contingent arrived in the city yesterday.

Asked if the Philippines is a very good side, Sandiego nodded Mongolia, though, will only hold one practice session at the Panaad.

DISPERSAL DRAFT

Tugade, Escobal get new lease on PBA life

By Jane Meneses

INSIGMAN LOBBY Tugade is back with his former team while good thing Escobal will be playing for his fifth team in three years.

Tugade and Escobal were the only players picked up from Rookie Ball's conditional dispersal draft held yesterday at the Philippine basketball Association office.

San Miguel Beer exercised its eighth pick on the 6-foot-3 Tugade, who helped the Boomers win the 2009 Fiesta Conference.

The 5-11 Escobal went to B-Meg Derby Ace, which picked him ninth overall.

Powerade, which had the top pick, didn't make a selection along with Rain Or Shine, NLEX, Alaska, Meralco, Ginebra and Talk N' Text.

Escobal, on his third year, suited up for Talk N' Text on his rookie year and was traded to Air Gotta Really Hercules and Rambo Ball in succeeding conferences.

Other active Rookie players outlined by the teams were Markus Arnisto, 900 Wattersight, Borjo Hemiola, Richard Ilw, Jojo Duiull, Ato Dimaculangan, Pun Bono, Wesley Cruz, Dennis Dan, Jason Ilmo, Ian Mark Medalla, Paolo Hubalde, Richard Alonzo and Gaston Mena.

Tugade and Escobal's contracts will be honored by their new teams, and both will return to Rookie in the third conference.

Rookie has decided to file a leave of absence for one conference, paving the entry of the Smart Gilas national team as a regular participant in the second conference.

Fate of league TV coverage decided tomorrow—Salud

THE PBA yesterday delivered action on Solar TV's request to transfer the airing of the games from SPM5 to Studio 23 beginning with the Governor's Cup on Feb. 14.

Commissioner Chito Salud said the PBA board will come up with a final decision tomorrow after its league board meeting scheduled this afternoon at such a move.

"The board asked for the Office of the Commissioner to take a look at all the legal implications of our contract with Solar," said Salud. "The board wants our legal teams to make sure we are legally covered with respect to our contract," he added.

Solar decided not to renew its partnership with the league owner for contract expires at the end of August, citing the expanding programming of SPM5.

James Meneses

TABUENA

WWWExpress-DHL golf fires off today

THE COUNTRY'S leading amateurs will be tested by a crash foreign field, including a slew of fourth Korean entrants, in what could be an explosive four-day battle for supremacy in the WWWExpress-DHL National Golf Championship beginning today at Candelaria's north course in Laguna.

Miguel Tabuena of ICTSI Cargolift heads the local contingent but will keep the scores at home and foil the visitors' attempt to duplicate the victory of Singapore's Quincy Quek over Fender Santos in 2008.

Tabuena, the Asian Games silver medalist, will tee off in the 8:20 a.m. flight with Singapore's Kyle Stephanie, ICTSI The Country Club's Justin Limjap and Riviera's Wang Jeung-hun.

Wang is trying to win this tournament after he was disqualified in the final round last year.

Singaporeans Jerome Ng, Gregory Foo and Brandel Ho are in the field along with Indonesians Surya Iwana and Rizaldi Abdurachman.

WWWExpress-DHL chair Rod Sellano, his brother Joe, president of WWWExpress, Cargolift chief Luigi Yalo and DHL officials Dulcisio Gatus, Anthony Lachica and Cesar Marinas will grace the ceremonial throw to kick off the 36th staging of the event.

Death of La Salle-PSC contract is exaggerated

BARE EYE

Barak Trinidad

HERE THAT the Memorandum of Agreement between the Philippine Sports Commission and the De La Salle University for the next schedule, terms of the pro-war Blue Mountain Football Field had been extended ever check seven through genuinely unstressed open season in December.

Information about the supposed death of the very commendable contract spread last week, while sports leaders, mainly those in football, were celebrating the first rejoicing and remembering of the football field that had hosted great members and big names, including Brazil's Pelé, former boxers as the Velasco Brothers, in 1976.

Of course, the shocked reality that we haven't got a single current football turf to the National Capital Region speaks volumes on the final state of sports development in the country.

Anyway, it was reported that the La Salle brothers were furious but opted not to resist the supposed order to extend the historic agreement.

What continued predominantly following reports on the alleged death of the La Salle-PSC MOA was that PSC chair Richie Garcia "had been ordered to unilaterally rescind the contract, without informing La Salle."

Naturally, La Salle had reasons to cuss and cry.

We see, other than the rebirth of the neglected football ground, the core of that MOA called for the re-establishment of a national college of physical education and the subsequent creation of a national sports academy.

This great possibility surfaced under the administration of former congressman Dante Angping, at the behest of his cronies at PSC-think.

* * *

Angping himself had set laws bored to protest, but the guy could've left as hardly as the La Salle brothers did.

Two economic sports dudes, who, through the years, had been bugging and blaming for the establishment of a national sports institute, acted fast and swore the making of the moment unearthed documentary.

"If this is not phoniest, then they've shamelessly squandered this genuine chance for Philippine sports to recover from years of neglect and mismanagement," the scribe told his editor.

He also requested his editor to send a reporter to ask the PSC chair who had ordered the reverse nature of the operation from Espanan avenue.

* * *

Now, the good news.

Restarting many such efficient inventive Pinoy-initiated projects like the Iloilo-PSC MOA was not totally dead. One story on 4.11.7.

"Sir. Richie Garcia said the PSC-La Salle MOA is still a go," she reported. "We said they were here to renew having tomorrow [yesterday] to discuss it and test. Educatic target's proposed sports hub."

"It's still part of the commitment of the PSC and La Salle to push through with the enhancement activities," said Garcia.

Angping Garcia said they are still in the process of sorting up.

No immediate functions set.

But, with news Iloilo suddenly shining on Philippine sports, the best thing to do is patiently, literally hand and foot, wait to see up the truly vital national college of physical education.

It's not every week that you get to have great guys like the La Salle brothers, who persistently care for Philippine sports.

Moscow Open: Barbosa finishes joint second

Final standings (Russian action unless noted):

9 Ipatov (Ukraine), 7½—4 Zhou Qi (China), 7; 5 Grischuk, 7; 6 Svidler (Russia), 6½; 7 Gelfand (Israel), 6; 8 Andreikin, 6; 9 Vitiugov, 6; 10 Bu Xiangzhi (China), 6; 11 Jakovenko, 6; 12 Ivanchuk (Ukraine), 6; 13 Eljanov (Ukraine), 6; 14 Sutovsky (Israel), 6; 15 Vitiugov, 6; 16 Volokitin (Ukraine), 6; 17 Khenkin, 6; 18 Nepomniachtchi, 6; 19 Rublevsky, 6; 20 Bologan (Moldova), 6; 21 Motylev, 6; 22 Navara (Czech Republic), 6; 23 Inarkiev, 6; 24 Ponomariov (Ukraine), 6; 25 Sjugirov, 6; 26 Kobalia, 6; 27 Timofeev, 6; 28 Rodshtein (Israel), 6; 29 Bocharov, 6; 30 Fressinet (France), 6; 31 Tomashevsky, 6; 32 Efimenko, 6; 33 Dreev, 6; 34 Sasikiran (India), 6; 35 Wang Yue (China), 6; 36 Malakhov, 6; 37 Ni Hua (China), 6; 38 Bruzon Batista (Cuba), 6; 39 Vallejo Pons (Spain), 6; 40 Ivanisevic, 6; 41 Grachev, 6; 42 Sarana, 6; 43 Kryvoruchko, 6; 44 Fedorchuk, 6; 45 Kasimdzhanov (Uzbekistan), 6; 46 Rodshtein, 6; 47 Bartel (Poland), 6; 48 Antipov, 6; 49 Sethuraman (India), 6; 50 Ragger (Austria), 6; 51 Sargissian, 6; 52 Smirnov, 6; 53 Ghaem Maghami (Iran), 6; 54 Sanikidze (Georgia), 6; 55 Zhigalko (Belarus), 6; 56 Ehlvest (Estonia), 6; 57 Kunte, 6; 58 Ivanov, 6; 59 Ni Hua, 6; 60 Sasikiran, 6; 61 Sanikidze, 6; 62 Ehlvest, 6; 63 Zhigalko, 6; 64 Kunte, 6; 65 Ivanov, 6.

MOSCOW—Filipino International Master Oliver Barbosa notched his fourth straight win and wound up joint second in the 2011 Aeroflot Open chess championships at the Russia State Social University Sunday.

The 24-year-old Barbosa beat Russian GM Sergey Volkov (ELO 2649) in 66 moves of the Queens' Gambit Declined to finish with 7½ points on seven wins, nine draws and one loss in the 9-SG (played in one day) tournament.

Barbosa, who shared first place with Georgian GM Zurab Azmaiparashvili in the Asian Championship held in Singapore last December, outsat second in the endgame following the exchange of queens and rooks. Volkov then blundered with his knight move on the 60th and lost his resolve.

The country's youngest-ever National Master at 11, Barbosa swept his last four matches, including his penultimate-round match against GM Pavel Eterev of Russia, and bounced up half a point behind Vladimir Belous of Russia.

Belous needed only 28th with an Elo of 2607, measured comparator GM Sihdeld Esipenko in the last round to capture the title on seven wins and two draws.

Barbosa emerged tied with Chinese GMs Zhou Qi and Yu Yangyi, Tajik GM Farrukh Amonatov, Ukrainian GM Igor Kovalenko, Russia GMs Maxim Matlakov and Stanislav Vokhidbrodsky and Dutch GM Sergey Tiviakov.

The Filipino winner of 18 online events in the United States, finished only ninth when the Buchholz tiebreak was applied.

GM Arkh Paul Gomez drew with Lu Shanglei of China to share 34th to 51st places with 6 points.

BARBOSA: Strong ending

Patriots banking on improved chemistry

By Jasmine W. Payo

BATANGAS: Team chemistry may just carry the AirAsia Philippine PATRIOTS through when the AirAsia Asean Basketball League championship series flies off this Sunday.

Coach Louie Alas said it is this now have to their game plan has kept him up have just days before the Patriots open defense of their title against the top-seeded Chang Thailand Hammers in the best-of-three opener in Bangkok.

"We have had no elementary wins, so I think we have a good chance," said Alas.

"There was an adjustment period during the elimination [with the arrival of new players]. We indeed elementary wins, either, mostly and defensively. We weren't on the same page. But now, the players talk to each other."

The Hammers...who dispersed of the thin-gapper Shoppers, 3-1, in their semifinal series Sunday night...earned homecourt advantage as the higher seeded team going into the playoffs.

"We have been since in their homecourt so there's no reason why we can't beat them again," said Alas.

The Patriots waited for almost two weeks for their Finals opponent since sweeping the Manila Campus Dragons, 2-0, in their own semifinal series.

Kaohsiung Centro chief Mikee Romero, who co-owns the team with businessman Tonyboy Cojuangco, also challenged the Patriots yesterday to live up to his former team's winning tradition.

Romero's Burbuser Centro franchise logged a record seven straight titles in the Philippine Basketball League.

Mid-season, the Patriots humiliated the championship runs of the Philippine team in the 2008 Southeast Asean Basketball Association Cup in Indonesia and in the 2007 Southeast Asean Games in Thailand.

"If we can play the kind of game, energy and enthusiasm we showed out during our series with the Dragons, then we're going to beat the Hammers," said import Eddie Preston.

CELTICS' Paul Pierce scores on a shot as rookie Ivo Ilic defends. REUTERS

Rondo, Celtics outlast Magic

BOSTON—Rajon Rondo scored 11 of his 26 points in the third quarter as the Boston Celtics beat the Orlando Magic, 93-88, on Sunday.

Boston led 46-43 at halftime and stretched that to 79-55 with 3:36 left in the third quarter. At that point, the Celtics had made 9 of their 10 shots in the period while the Magic had hit just 4 of 19.

Paul Pierce added 16 points and Kevin Garnett had 16 for the Celtics, who improved to 22-4 at home. Dwight Howard had 26 points and 13 rebounds for the Magic, who dropped to 18-8 on the road.

Celtics guard Ray Allen made two three-pointers to move within three of the NBA record of 2,560 held by Reggie Miller. Boston is at Charlotte on Monday night.

At Miami, Dwyane Wade had 26 points, eight rebounds and eight assists as Miami beat the Los Angeles Clippers, 97-79, to stretch its winning streak to six games.

Chris Bosh scored 16, Eddy Haslem added 15 and Carlos James had 22 points for Miami. The Heat started the fourth quarter on a 16-4 burst to pull away.

Blake Griffin had his 42nd double-double for the season, finishing with 21 points and 16 rebounds. Randy Foye scored 15, Baron Davis added 14 and Ryan Gomes added 12 for Los Angeles, which fell to 3-17 away from home—not the best of signs for a team with two meetings (one when? before an 11-game road trip by the end of the month.

At New York, Amare Stoudemire matched his season high with 41 points as New York beat Philadelphia, 117-103, to split a home-and-away series.

Landon Landry Fields added a career-high 25 points and grabbed 10 rebounds as New York rebounded from a 100-98 loss Friday night in Philadelphia to snap a two-game losing streak and win for just the fourth time in 13 games.

Andrea Bargnani, completed by Elton Brand on Friday, shot 17 of 25 from the field in his 17th career 40-point game.

At Newark, New Jersey Deron Jones scored a season-high 28 points as Indiana ripped the Nets, 105-86, to remain unbeaten-at-home games under interim coach Frank Vogel.

Mike Dunleavy added 17 points and led a triple to ignite an early 16-point run that put the Pacers ahead for good. AP

Packers nail 13th NFL championship

ARLINGTON, TEXAS—Capping one of the greatest postseasons for any quarterback, Aaron Rodgers led the Packers to their 13th NFL championship in 14 years Sunday with a 31-25 victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Rodgers, the game's Most Valuable Player, outlasted his legion of Chesterfield foes with a spectacular six-game string that should finally erase the bitterness of the Brett Favre separation in Green Bay. He's now equal with Favre in Super Bowl wins and he outranked the Packers' record of NFL titles to 13, nine before the Super Bowl era.

"It's what I dreamt about as a little kid watching Joe Montana and Steve Young," Rodgers said, "and we just won the Super Bowl."

The Packer QB threw for three touchdowns, two to Greg Jennings, and the Packers overcame seven more injuries, building a 21-3 lead, then hanging on to become the second No. 6-seeded team to win the championship. Coincidentally, the 2005 champion were the other.

Rodgers threw for 304 yards, including a 29-yard touchdown to Jordy Nelson, who had nine catches for 140 yards to make up for the no-big-deeps. Rodgers's fourth Jennings, normally his favorite target, for 23- and 6-yard scores.

"Wow! It's a great day to be great, baby," Jennings said.

Then the Packers held on as Pittsburgh drove to the 1-yard line.

"We've been a team that's overcome adversity all year," Jennings said. "Our head captain [Charles Woodson] goes down, emotional in the locker room. Our No. 1 receiver [Donald Driver] goes down, more emotions are going. Brigitte Nelson's out. But we find a way to battle it up and cover is all on here on the field."

Four teams have been as resourceful as Brett Packers, who couldn't wait to touch the Vince Lombardi Trophy, named for their legendary coach who won the first two Super Bowls. Several of them followed it. AP

QUEEN: Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers (with ball) is tackled by the Pittsburgh Steelers' Ziggy Hood. AFP/File

NCA stages fifth derby

THE NATIONAL Cockers Alliance's (NCA) league to fifth derby to be hosted by Manny and Arman Santos, today at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

The top six in the NCA circuit, the basis for the Cocker of the Year season are: Rodriguez Christopher and Agustin Ali Cobb, 16 1/2 points; 2) San Basque, 14 1/2; Ernst, 12; 3) and Ernst Cruz, 11.

The next NCA derbies, sponsored by Equipment Complement, are on Feb. 15 and 22. Both events will be hosted by Bebot Bonoc, Rod Bradley and Homer Mercado and friends.

AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS: Atty. Ugo Arroyo, Jun-Chua Chong, Ernesto Ernst, Ernesto Ernst, Mercado, Nino Medina, Abdel Nasir, Ivan Nicdao, Art Santiago, Jack Sayson, Jerome Ong, Efren Quiao, Jun Ramirez, Jun Ramirez, Jun Ramirez

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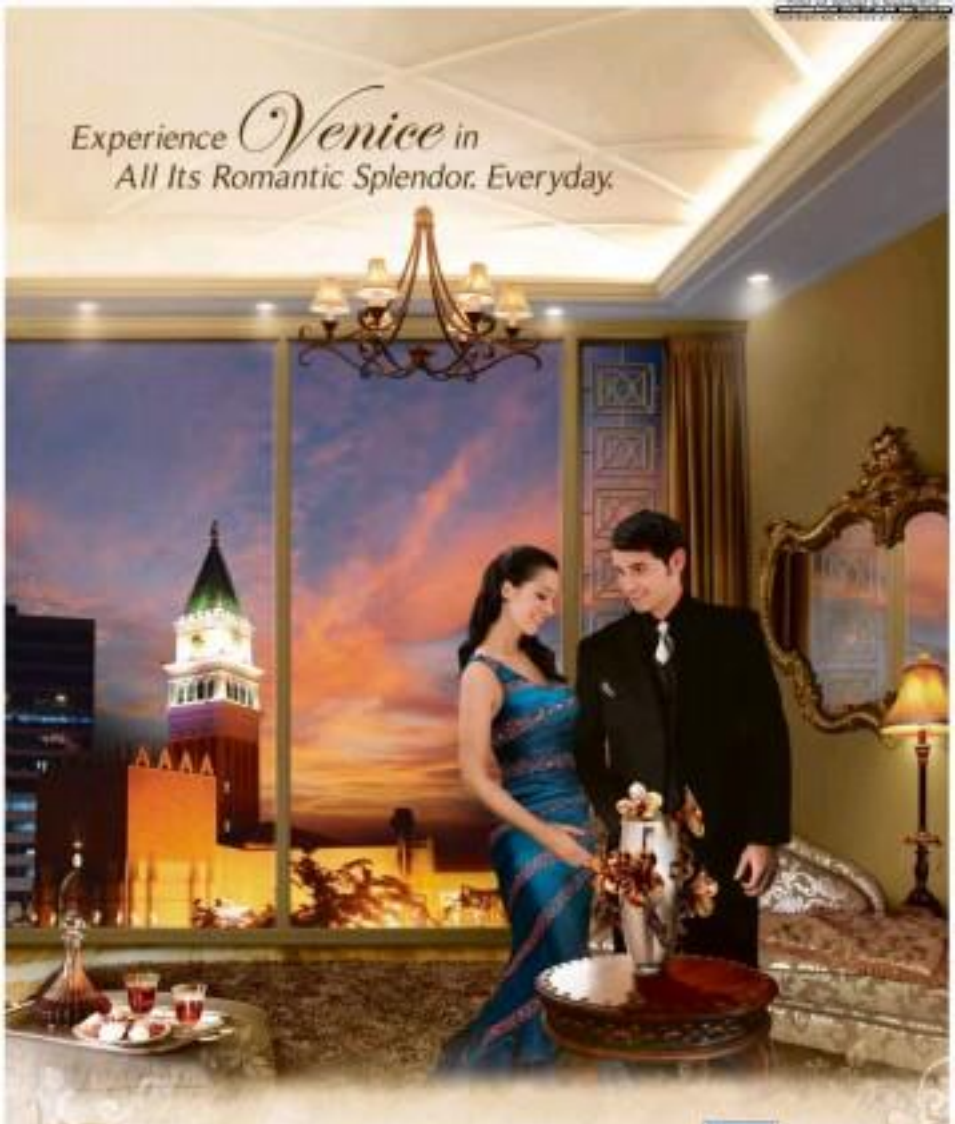

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DID YOU KNOW

TODAY, FEB. 8, is the 129th birth anniversary of playwright and director Juan Abad who was born in Sampaloc, Manila. He wrote nationalistic plays such as "Malaya" (Freedom), "Maalaala mo Pa Kaibigan" and "Ang Tambalang Ginto" during the American occupation which led to his many arrests. *Compiled by Grizelda Gonzales, Inquirer Research*

FOR INCREASED POLICE VISIBILITY, PUBLIC SAFETY

NCRPO deploys 300 bus marshals

By Miko Morales

AROUND 300 policemen have been deployed as bus marshals by the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) as part of its efforts to step up police visibility and ensure the public's safety.

In a statement, NCRPO chief Director Nicanor Bartolome said that the policemen, who were taken from the Public Safety Battalion of the five police districts in Metro Manila, would conduct random security checks to passenger buses plying routes all over the metropolis.

According to him, the deployment was a permanent arrangement that was expected to cover an average of 1,000 buses a day.

Bartolome added that the bus marshals would be deployed in pairs. They will be in full police uniform complete with identification cards and will complement the policemen who conduct street patrols.

The NCRPO chief said that he would also be monitoring his men's incident inspection of passenger buses to ensure that these were being checked by bus marshals.

Aside from conducting security checks, the policemen will also ensure that the buses are not overloaded with the help of personnel from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) which recently revived its crackdown on overloaded vehicles.

The DPWH had likened overloaded vehicles, particularly trucks and container vans, for the poor conditions of roads nationwide.

"We also check that the buses are not overloaded because overloading damages our roads and highways, and of course, we also want to ensure the comfort of our commuters," Bartolome said.

NCRPO spokesperson Senior Supt. Dionardo Carlos explained that the bus marshals were part of the police integrated patrol system, along with foot policemen, mobile and bike patrols, the Motorized Anti-crime Crisis Operation, tourist police and the platoon inspectors of the Metro Rail Transit and Light Rail Transit systems.

"Even before the Edsa blast, the NCRPO already had bus marshals deployed, but this time, we have increased their numbers to [step up] their visibility," said Carlos, referring to the Jan. 25 bombing of a bus on Edsa which left five persons dead and 13 injured.

Mandaluyong cops release image of slay suspect

By Nikko Calleja

THE MANDALUYONG police released on Monday a computer-generated image of the suspect in the killing of the political adviser and longtime friend of Mayor Benhur Abalos.

Senior Supt. Armando Bellabi, Mandaluyong police chief, furnished the long-awaited copy of the computer-aided photo of the alleged killer of Joselito "Joji" Sarmiento, the chief political officer of Abalos.

Sarmiento succumbed to two gunshot wounds on his 47th birthday a few hours after he was shot inside his car parked along Barangka Drive in Mandaluyong City on Friday night.

Bellabi said the sketch was based on the descriptions given by six witnesses who had seen the **man approach the victim and walk away a few seconds later.**

Police described the suspect as between 45 to 50 years old, 5'4" to 5'5" in height, of large build and dark-skinned.

The man was seen wearing a blue T-shirt and denim pants.

Abalos was emotional overcome yesterday as he ended his State of the City Address, in the awarding celebration of the Mandaluyong's 66th Liberation Day and 17th year of cityhood, at the Mandaluyong gymnasium in front of at least a thousand city employees and residents.

"This was my performance in the middle 2010. But I did not work on this alone... Joe was part of all these," Abalos said.

Sarmiento was the federation president of the Sabayang Pagkakaisa ng Barangay now the Sangguniang Kabataan, before he became the political strategist of the mayor in 1995.

The city government flew its Philippine flag at half mast to mourn Sarmiento's death and pay tribute to his contributions to Mandaluyong.

Abalos announced on Sunday that he had just up a P1 million reward for any information that can lead to the arrest of the killer.

Apart from the witnesses' statements, footage taken by a CCTV (closed circuit television) camera could also be helpful, he said.

"Prior to the shooting, the gunmen was seen riding a motorcycle. He took the U-turn slot and then parked a few meters away from the victim," Bellabi said.

SKETCH on descriptions from witnesses, police came out with this computer-generated image of the suspected gunman in the slaying of Joe Sarmiento, Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos' chief political officer

MAKE INTERESTING HAPPEN.
02.11.11

Lawmen catch 'twin' of legitimate taxi cab in QC

By Julie M. Aurelio

LAST WEEK, a taxi cab driver was going about his business, taking his passenger to his destination, when he spotted something which nearly distracted him from his driving.

Geoffrey Lampago said the police that he was driving in Project 7, Quezon City when he saw another taxi cab which had the same plate number as the taxi he was driving.

He said his first impulse was to go after the driver of the other taxi cab and confront him. However, since he had a passenger he couldn't leave in the middle of the street, he decided to let the other taxi cab go.

Instead, he called up his operator and told him about the unusual incident.

The operator alerted Lampago's officials who immediately went after the other cab, resulting in the arrest of its driver who was later identified as Jovy Jimeo.

Modus operandi

A top official of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) yesterday called the modus operandi "kambal" or twin.

In a press conference, Chief Supt. Benjamin Magoole said a syndicate has been busted by car jacking syndicates in legitimate the use of stolen vehicles and stolen/ fake/stolen.

According to him, Lampago's unit was tipped by the task force "Sasakyan Team" with license plate PDS-149.

On the other hand, the other cab was operating under the name "Sugo 2009."

Supt. Ferdinand Villanueva of the QCPD's anti-car theft unit said Jimeo's taxi cab was a private vehicle which had been reported to make it look like a taxi.

However, its registration documents were valid, he added.

"We checked and we found out that the vehicle is not in the records list," Villanueva said.

Initially, the other taxi was illegally using on the franchise of Lampago's cab, Chief Insp. Rodelito Manotoc, QCPD anti-car theft unit deputy chief, said.

According to him, Jimeo and the still unidentified owner of the other taxi cab would be charged for using a fake license plate.

NO BIRDS, PLEASE
A passenger plane passes behind several buildings as it prepares to land at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport last set before airport personnel check the surroundings for stray birds. Consecutive flights bound for Manila face a growing danger from birds which were displaced from nearby swamps following development projects in the area. AFP

Prosecutor files raps vs salesman

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice prosecutor who allegedly threatened a salesman with a gun last week in Quezon City has filed criminal charges against his accuser.

In her affidavit-complaint to Assistant State Prosecutor John Rosario on Friday in the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office detailed the charges against Lucio Case Lim for grave threats, alarm and scandal, discharge of firearms and attempted homicide.

The DOJ prosecutor's recollection of the Feb. 3 incident outside his rented house on Regina Street in San Francisco del Monte painted a different version, with Rosario claiming he was respectful toward Lim.

The complainant was Chief Inspector Lim filed a case for malicious mischief, threat using a firearm, and slight physical injuries against Rosario.

"I am a responsible duly licensed gun owners for more than 10 years and I was never involved in any incidence like this," Rosario's complaint read.

The DOJ prosecutor alleged that it was Lim who shouted at him and even tried to grab his gun, and that the gun was fired during the struggle for the firearm.

Lim, 25, who was then visiting his girlfriend Kathleen Ramirez, alleged that Rosario fired a gun at him six.

The salesman's car was parked in front of Rosario's compound along Regina Street when Lim's car arrived.

According to Lim's version, Rosario was allegedly drunk and was angered when he saw Lim's car blocking the gateway. The prosecutor allegedly pointed his gun at Lim and even fired at the car.

Lim claimed that he was wounded on his legs when the gun was fired during the incident which happened at around 10:45 p.m. Rosario left the compound after the incident.

The prosecutor said he wanted to report the incident at once to the investigating police station but did not do so.

"... I prevented myself from doing so because it would appear that I was at fault being the gun owner and that the car of the respondent was hit by a bullet... I feared that I might be arrested and accused of the crimes that were committed by the respondent," Rosario said.

In his version, Rosario said he saw Lim's maroon Honda City parked in front of the gate and that he politely asked Lim to move his car so that he could park his vehicle.

The prosecutor alleged that Lim shouted at him, even shooting bewildered at him, but Rosario claimed he maintained his courteous demeanor.

"I was totally shocked and surprised because I was very much respectful, and yet he replied as if I was disturbing him, values in truth and in fact, he was at fault by not properly parking his car away from the driveway," Rosario said.

After showing a couple of punches at him, Lim grappled for control of a gun nestled underneath Rosario's driving seating. The firearm went off and hit the car, according to the prosecutor.

After getting his car, Rosario claimed Lim was still in an aggressive manner, prompting him to drive away to avoid any more harm.

"I preferred to leave the place although he continued to shout at me to avoid greater evil, avoid the involvement of my family and to avoid his aggressive mood," the affidavit added.

In the past, Rosario had been accused of receiving bribe money after dismissing an illegal drugs case against the so-called Alabang boys in 2009.

In defense of PNP's Boysie Rosales

ON TARGET
Norman Bordadora

A MILITANT intelligence report linking police Director Roberto "Boysie" Rosales to car theft gang is bogus.

I don't know why the supposed intelligence report was print when one, the military doesn't have anything to do with crime; two, the intelligence information was false or untrue.

Boysie Rosales, a two-star police general, a protector of car thieves?

Is the Pope Catholic?

Here you guys ever Number recent as a police officer?

Criminal Record:

- Arrested Gold Cross model; Modalya ng Kidnap-tangnap Kaso; Modalya ng Kompanero ni Pogi-Loghod; Military Heist Modals; Modalya ng Kagalingan; Modalya ng Kadalasang; Modalya ng Depot.
- Junior Officer of the Year, 1981
- Company Commander of the Year, 1987
- (Died of Police of the Year, 1989
- Provincial Commander of the Year, 2002
- Police Senior Officer of the Year for Region 4, 2002
- Police Director Supreme of the Year (Died of Police), 1999 and 1998)
- Congressional Recognition Award, 1999

It defies logic that one of the most decorated officers in the Philippine National Police (PNP) would destroy his name by protecting a criminal syndicate.

When Rosales was PNP provincial director, he earned many millions of pesos in bribe offer from Pampanga, Quezon Mayor Rosales where he amassed the treasure-pointing had a lot of southern Philippines hydrochloride (shabu) abused a municipal authorities.

That was where he got the PNP provincial director of the year award.

One retired police officer, who is not a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, PMMA like Boysie, spoke very highly of Rosales.

"Bakit pa natin si Boysie ang pag-pulan nito sa pagpapatay ng mga car napper samantalang di nga niya pinatulan ang mga pagkakataon nang siya ay mag-pasasan pa?" (Why should I blame Boysie for those protecting carnappers when he didn't even pay a finger in other more lucrative rackets when he was still in power?)

Even retired police official, Ernesto Dinkay, former chief of the Western Police District (WPD), confident Rosales like "best friend" that the Manila police (MPD) has ever had.

Looking Rosales in a retrieved eyebrows smacks of petty and pathetic "malicious" (military politics) in Filipino within the PNP.

Rosales is a stumbling block for the top PNP post since he's one of two most senior officers next to Director General Raul Bacalzo, PNP chief, who's retiring later this year.

Initially, Palace Presidential Boy was ill-advised in relieving Rosales as director of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) and placing him on "floating" status just because he was identified with former President Gloria Arroyo.

GMA appointed Rosales as NCRPO chief in 2008, of which Rosales to a divide-guided assembly.

If Rosales was NCRPO chief during the hijacking of a scooter bus by a lone gunman, the assurance that media/Deputy Ombudsman have taken place.

It's a pity that we have a President who has a parochial kind of leadership.

***

A famous congressman, who now occupies a high position had a funny way of passing the time when he was a member of the House of Representatives, according to a former colleague.

This ex-congressman turned high official in the Aquino government was always seen talking to himself and laughing.

Scatterbrained?

Does he still talk to and laugh by himself?

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METROBRIEFS

Militants offer solution for bay cleanup

THE DENR may be clean-up Manila Bay is to disallow industries and commercial establishments from building structures in the bay, militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya said. The group issued a statement after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) created on the Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO) in a bid to speed up the cleanup of one of Metro Manila's top destinations.

"Please allow us to state the real score about Manila Bay. Eighty percent of the contested water washes that are threatened or damaged by the wastes from industrial and commercial establishments situated along the bay," Pamalakaya said. "The reclamation activities of the government that began during the Marcos era and which continue at present are also destroying Manila Bay and have prevented the ecosystem and marine life from regenerating," it added. According to the militant group, about 30,000 hectares of Manila Bay waters have been reclaimed since Marcos' time. Pamalakaya said government Secretary Ramon Paje's order to strengthen MBCO exercise workers in the bay's rapid development along the bay. The group has proposals made by Philippine Reclamation and Banking Corporation to develop 80-hectare casino and resort complex in a reclaimed area in Manila Bay that would begin in the third quarter of the year. Rodina L. Alaro

Valenzuela, NGO tours up to protect juveniles

BUAN EFFORT to curb juvenile delinquency, the Valenzuela City has teamed up with an international non-government organization to jointly mandate a new initiating facility for children in conflict with the law. The memorandum of agreement was signed by Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian and representatives of Tahanan Child Rights International, a faith-based group, the other day, in the presence of other city and police officials. "The only solution to our problems is to provide sustainable protection geared toward restoring the dignity and self-respect of these youth," Gatchalian said. The memorandum stipulates the "shared responsibility" of the local government and the NGO on "the salaries of staff, equipment and facilities, manual of operations and operational procedures, and food supplies" of the under-board in Valenzuela City. "The local government for its part will provide the physical facilities, monthly expenditures or utility bills, security guards, medical volunteers and social workers, ..." said Councilor Tony Daquila, Valenzuela City drug abuse council chairman. Kristine Hilton Manzano

Fruit vendor killed

HOMICIDE investigators are looking into a holdup or extortion as the motive in the killing of a fruit vendor early one day in Manila. Manila Police District (MPD) homicide section head, Insp. Bernardo Mosuela, said policemen under Mario Calvo, 48, a resident of Tondo, was shot four times in the chest and spree with a 9 mm pistol. Mosuela pointed out that witnesses to the shooting incident, which happened at 7:25 a.m. on Sunday in front of the victim's house, heard the unidentified gunman repeatedly shout angrily DAMA, "Where is your money? Hand over the money." The vendor died two hours after he was shot.

Jamaludin Ibrahim

UN action sought amid Cambodian-Thai clashes

By Seth Mydans

BANGKOK—Deepening a bitter border dispute, fighting erupted for a fourth day on Monday between Thai and Cambodian forces near a disputed 11th-century Hindu temple, and a Thailand military spokesperson said the time for negotiation had passed.

The renewed fighting came a day after Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia asked the UN Security Council to intervene and urged countries to stop what he called Thai aggression around the temple, which the Cambodians say used had been damaged by cross-border shelling. Witnesses reported shelling near the temple on Monday.

The Thai military spokesperson, Col. Sansern Kaewkamnerd, said that there would be "no more talks" and that Thai troops would engage in "action and" fighting with Cambodian troops, according to the website of The Nation newspaper in Bangkok.

The temple is claimed by both nations and has been the focus of tension and periodic military clashes since 2008.

Both sides accused the other of starting the latest fighting, which has left at least two people dead and an unspecified number wounded. Its deaths were immediately reported Monday.

"Cambodians always open fire first," Col. Sansern said. "We will restrain fire when the Cambodians stop firing at us."

It was not clear how severely the temple, Preah Vihear, had been damaged. A Unesco World Heritage site, the temple was slightly damaged by shelling in the last serious clash a year ago.

A wing of one Preah Vihear temple has collapsed as a direct result of the Thai artillery bombardment," a Cambodian military commander was quoted as saying in a statement by the Cambodian Mine Action Authority Council of Ministers.

The statement also quoted the unidentified commander as saying the Thai side had used "gas shells" as it fired 138 mm rounds at Cambodian soldiers, but it did not elaborate.

The dispute is rooted in conflicting century-old maps and a ruling in 1962 by the International Court of Justice awarding the temple to Cambodia. New tensions were set off in July 2008 when forces seized the temple at Preah Vihear site and placed it inside Cambodia.

BONE OF CONTENTION Cambodia's famed Preah Vihear temple at the Cambodian-Thai border in Preah Vihear province. AP

Tensions along the border have become entwined in Thailand's political disputes, with the forces known as the yellow shirts accusing the government of failing to defend Thai sovereignty.

The near-fun become a rallying cry in recent weeks for the yellow shirts, who have begun a series near the prime minister's office, where they staged a blockade for more than six months in 2008.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Abhisit Vejajiva of Thailand said the government needed a peaceful resolution, but would defend national borders.

"If our sovereignty is violated, we have no power it still must," he said.

Anger was stoked last week when a Cambodian court sentenced two Thai nationalists to prison terms of six and eight years on a charge of trespassing and spying in the border region.

Pansiree had already been arrested in Thailand this year after the Cambodian side received a plaque near the temple that read, in English, "Here is the property of Cambodia." She was pardoned by Cambodian territory on July 15, 2008, and withdrew at 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 3, 2008."

New York Times News Service

Russian lawmaker flees to US

FUGITIVE? AP

WASHINGTON—A wealthy Russian lawmaker has fled with his family to the United States, asking for legal consideration based on what he says was persecution in his native land over political differences with President Dmitry Medvedev and Moscow's former mayor—he said he doesn't feel safe even in the United states.

"I do think it's possible there is assassination attempt can be mounted against me here," he said Tuesday by interview over a few blocks from the White House. The interview with The Associated Press was his first with Western media and came a few weeks after one of his relatives was gunned down in the Russian city of Astrakhan on Dec. 7, an attack he claims is connected with his political views.

The emigre owns the Pushkin Hotel, a prime piece of Moscow real estate, a new being remodeled in a fish-out in Cyprus, the London Court of International Arbitration, on the Web and on Capitol Hill. It provides a rare insider's view of the shadowy world of big money, power and politics in Russia, where wealth and connections can sometimes trump property rights and the rule of law.

The case could become a headache for the Obama administration. The US is counting on Moscow's support to security thing from the fight against extremists in Afghanistan to efforts to thwart the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea.

If the 49-year-old Ryzhkov's pleas to remain in the US, the administration could face a difficult choice: risk angering the Kremlin by declining a high-ranking Russian official charged with financial crimes, or force a lawyer to return to Russia for a jail system that even Russian officials recognize is riddled with corruption and cronyism.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev came into office in 2008 pledging to battle what he called Russia's "legal nihilism." But to this, many inside and outside Russia see more rhetoric than reform. In its latest rankings, the respected watchdog group Transparency International placed Russia 154th out of 180 countries in its corruption index, just ahead of Sierra Leone but behind Kenya. AP

Taliban no close ally of al-Qaida, says NYU

KABUL, Afghanistan—The Afghan Taliban have been wrongly perceived as close ideological allies of al-Qaida, and they could be persuaded to renounce the global terrorist group, according to a report to be published on Monday by New York University.

The report goes on to say that there was calculated friction between the groups' leaders before the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and that the Taliban have only intensified.

The authors, Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, have worked in Afghanistan for years and edited the autobiography of a Taliban diplomat, many of whose ideas are reflected in the report. The authors are among a small group of experts who have the only way to visit the war in Afghanistan is to begin prior revelations to the Taliban.

The prevailing view in Washington, however, is that the Taliban and al-Qaida share the same ideology," said Tom Gregg, a former UN official in Afghanistan and a fellow at the Center on International Cooperation at NYU, which is publishing the report. "It is not an ideology that shows it a issues of a pragmatic political alliance. And therefore a political approach to the Taliban ultimately could deliver a more practical separation between the two groups."

Some US officials have argued that the military surge in Afghanistan will weaken the Taliban and increase the incentive to negotiate. But the report cautions that the campaign may make it harder to reach a settlement.

The report, "Separating the Taliban from al-Qaida: The Core of Success in Afghanistan," says attacks on Taliban field commanders and prominent leaders will force the movement open to younger, more radical fighters and will give al-Qaida greater influence. The authors suggest that the United States should engage older Taliban leaders before they lose control of the movement.

The authors do not oppose State's ruse list suggest that negotiations should accompany the fighting. A political settlement is necessary to address the underlying reasons for the insurgency they write. Otherwise, they warn, the conflict will escalate.

The report draws on the authors' interviews with unnamed Taliban officials in Kabul, Kandahar and Rhott, and on published statements by the Taliban leadership. The authors include that Taliban officials have reservations if they make on-the-record statements opposing al-Qaida.

Nevertheless, Taliban leaders have issued statements in the last two years that indicate they are distancing their movement from al-Qaida. The report says the Taliban will not tolerate al-Qaida as a condition in negotiations, but will offer to close its territory to groups of terrorists.

The report reflects many of the arguments put forward by Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, whose autobiography published in English as "My Life With the Taliban," the Islamist militia's former envoy to Pakistan went in Kabul after being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and has been an intermediary between the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, and the Taliban.

The report argues that Taliban leaders did not know of the Sept. 11 attacks in advance and that they refused to harbor Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan.

In November 2001, the report says, senior Taliban figures gathered in Pakistan and agreed to join a process of political engagement and reconciliation with the new government of Afghanistan. Yet the Taliban came to nothing, since neither the Afghan government nor the US government was any reason to engage with the Taliban, the report says.

A member of the Haqqani family which leads other US officials regard as the most dangerous Taliban group, was killed in a 2008 drone strike in Pakistan, but he was detained and badly tested, the report states.

Steve Biddle, a former CIA officer who prepared a strategic policy review on Afghanistan and Pakistan for President Barack Obama in 2009, places the Afghan Taliban ideologically "on the far right side of the spectrum" distributing the United States. New York Times News Service

THE statue of Christ the Redeemer is seen behind the Corcovado during an operation against drug dealers in Rio de Janeiro on Feb. 6. REUTERS

Police take over 9 more Rio slums

RIO DE JANEIRO—Police faced no resistance on Sunday as they took control of nine more slums contaminated by drug traffickers, an operation that also led to the arrest of an alleged ex-Nazi German doctor working as a makeshift hospital in one of the shanty towns.

Backed by dozens of armored vehicles and a helicopter, nearly 1,000 police officers, agents and troops invaded the downtown slums and easily took control without any exchange of gunshots in less than two hours.

Police spokesperson Henrique de Lima Carmo Santos said authorities will now begin installing police units in the shanty-towns under a program in which security forces have been taking over and pacifying the city's poor communities.

Authorities said that while police searched for drug traffickers, weapons and drugs, they found a German man who is living illegally in Brazil and apparently helped treat injured gang members at a house in a slum. AP

Ex-WikiLeaks colleagues form alternative website

LONDON—As the WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange fights extradition to Sweden to face allegations of sexual wrongdoing, a dozen of his former colleagues are starting an alternative website for whistleblowers to be governed by what they describe as a renewed vision of radical transparency.

The new organization, OpenLeaks, will begin work in earnest this summer, said Herbert Snorrason, a Swedish software programmer who is involved. It aims, he said, to avoid the "influence of a single figurehead" by refusing to handle documents itself. Instead, it will act as a neutral conduit to connect whistleblowers with media and human rights organizations.

OpenLeaks emerges from the ashes of a struggle between Assange and many of his closest associates, last September, about a future members of WikiLeaks left their months-recurring leakage of inspectors behavior and of jeopardizing the project by confusing the allegations of sexual wrongdoing, which he denies, with the site's work. The defectors, Snorrason said, decided to start their own project.

"It's no secret that we had disagreements with how WikiLeaks was being managed," he said, "and a large part of what we hope to accomplish with OpenLeaks is to avoid those problems."

Assange has often said that he sees it as his mission, in part, to raise awareness of the immoral behavior of governments around the world, including his own. That is also the stated aim of Assange, a movement and charismatic figure with strong political views and a penchant for the unorthodox and revered by his fans as well as those who have found themselves the subjects of his organization's disclosures.

Though those behind OpenLeaks are at pains not to criticize Assange, and have repeatedly made it clear that they do not see themselves in his competence, their aims subtly differ from his. Some of the new leaders of the site have also said that they have defined a new era of online news leaks.

It is partly one by Daniel Domscheidt-Berg, a popular programmer from Berlin who was once Assange's deputy. Since he left WikiLeaks in September, he has been working on a book which he promises will reveal "the evolution, finances and internal tensions" inside WikiLeaks. New York Times News Service

Roche posts solid results, growth

BASEL, Switzerland—The Roche Group posted solid overall results in 2010. Group sales were unable to local currencies in 47.5 billion Swiss francs (roughly the same in US dollars).

The good underlying growth of both Pharmaceuticals and Diagnostics divisions compensated for the expected decline in TamiFlu sales and the impacts of healthcare reforms and austerity measures.

Excluding TamiFlu, sales increased by 8 percent in local currencies. The Pharmaceuticals Division experienced 7% percent of Group sales and the Diagnostics Division contributed 22 percent.

Sales in the Pharmaceuticals Division declined by 2 percent in local currencies to 37.1 billion Swiss francs. Excluding TamiFlu, local growth rose 9 percent, above market growth. Demand for the oncology drugs Avastin, MabThera/Rituxan, Herceptin, Xeloda and Tarceva continued to grow strongly.

Additional major growth drivers were Actemra/RoActemra (approved for arthritis, Mircera in anemia and Lucentis in ophthalmology. Actemra, which is now launched in some 50 countries including the United States, the EU and Japan, reached sales of 197 million Swiss francs in 2010.

These positive factors compensated for the negative impact of price decline in TamiFlu sales, the reduction in Gelfilspo sales due to US patent expiry in May 2009 and the impacts of the US healthcare reforms. European austerity measures and price cuts in Japan.

The Diagnostics Division increased sales to 8.1 billion Swiss francs in 2010, growing 6 percent in local currencies, thereby strengthening its leading market position. Major drivers were Professional Diagnostics with 11 percent sales growth and Tarceva Cora with 4 percent sales growth.

The Group's core operating profit increased by 7 percent in local currencies.

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is a leader in research-focused healthcare with combined strengths in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. Roche is the world's largest biotech company with truly differentiated medicines in oncology, virology, inflammation, metabolism and CNS. Roche is also the world leader in in vitro diagnostics, tissue-based cancer diagnostics and a pioneer in diabetes management. (1 Swiss franc = $1.0877)

Figures sign up 'Kapa Kon' Alliance of ABS-CBN to host the 'Ang Bubay Bampoon' Nationwide Search for the Most Successful Hog Raisers in the Country. Joining him are the UNIMICO Representatives (from left-right): Ms. Rizelle G. Capili, D.V.M., Assistant Product Manager and Head of Swine; Swine Veterinary, Edwin C. Magsaysay, AVP for Marketing, and Clint B. Buenaobra - Senior Product Manager and Cluster Head of Swine Feeds and Veterinary.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ruivivar

LIVIA (left) and Alessia Schepp, missing after harrowed suicide near a railway station in Italy.

Swiss, Italian, French cops hunt for missing twin girls

BUSSI, Switzerland—Police in Italy, Switzerland and France searched on Sunday for 6-year-old twin girls who disappeared after their father died in an apparent suicide.

The body of Matthias Reppar Schepp, 43, a Canadian-born resident of Switzerland, was found by a railway station near the southern Italian port city Bari shortly before 11 p.m. on Thursday, according to Swiss police in the canton of Vaud.

Authorities believe Schepp, who was separated from his wife, threw himself under a train. Police in Switzerland, Italy and France are searching for the twin girls, Alessia and Livia, who lived in Lausanne with their mother, Irina Lucidi, 44.

According to Italian news reports, Schepp picked up his daughters from their mother's home on Jan. 28 for the weekend.

Swiss police say Schepp, rather than returning the girls to their mother, took them when he left his home in St.-Sulpice, a suburb of Lausanne, on Jan. 30.

Both girls were described as wearing glasses and blue jeans, with Alessia bundled in a white jacket over a striped shirt, and Livia dressed in a purple ski jacket over a green T-shirt.

Swiss authorities say they alerted all European police that the girls were missing on Jan. 30. Interpol also was notified.

Swiss police say an initial investigation has determined that Matthias Schepp drove the girls in a Swiss-registered Audi A6 through Annecy, France, on Monday and on to Marseille on Tuesday.

After leaving Lausanne, Schepp turned up in Marseille and Toulon, France, before showing up in Italy. Italian police official Alfredo Fabbrocini said:

Schepp apparently made some large cash withdrawals in Marseille, but it is not yet known whether he took the girls to Italy with him. Recent robberies in the Italian Alps were something a water raise near the train station where Schepp's body was found by the two training girls.

"There's a gap of a few days," Fabbrocini said, adding that police were trying to track down the man's movements through cash withdrawals, CCTV, witnesses and phone calls.

Authorities have urged anybody with information to come forward. The search has included helicopters and dogs, according to ANSA, the Italian news agency. A Facebook page set up to find the girls invites people with information to make contact. AP

Egypt opposition rejects government reform offer

CAIRO—Opponents of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's embattled regime on Sunday dismissed as insufficient an offer to include them in political reform plans and renewed their demand that he step down.

In a landmark concession, Vice President Omar Suleiman sat down with the groups, which included the banned Muslim Brotherhood, but the talks produced no immediate breakthrough in the two-week-old standoff.

As night fell, central Cairo's tent towns (which figures was still filled with thousands of anti-regime protesters adamant that the start of dialogue would not divert them from their campaign to unseat Egypt's strongman.

After two weeks of mass street protests and more than 300 deaths—and with global pressure mounting on Suleiman to negotiate in good faith—there is more drama and a ratcheting up of the government's most powerful foes.

Government spokesperson Magdi Radi said the parties had agreed to form a committee of judges and politicians "to study and propose constitutional amendments ... by the first week of March."

Negotiators also agreed to open an office for complaints about the treatment of political prisoners, loosen media curbs, lift an emergency law "depending on the security situation," and expel foreign interference.

But Suleiman refused another key demand of the opposition, saying he would not assume Mubarak's powers and rule in his stead during the transition.

Not all of the opposition movements included in the 13-day-old uprising against Mubarak's rule were present at the talks. For one UN nuclear watchdog head and leading dissident Mohamed ElBaradei was not invited.

Other opposition leaders met Suleiman in a palatial governmental hall under a huge

ANTI-RECOVERNMENT protesters sit and lie inside the tracks of an Egyptian Army tank, built to pressure them from running and to shield themselves from rocks in Cairo on Feb. 1.

Mubarak timeline since:

"God bless the dead. God bless the dead," recited a Christian preacher wearing a cross. Beside him, a Muslim cleric stood holding a Koran, as the faithful chanted, "A single hand! A single hand," in near-faith solidarity.

Meanwhile, a measure of normal life began to return to the biggest city in the Arab world. Queues formed in front of banks that had been shut for more than a week and workforces scrubbed down shopfronts.

Mubarak has thus far refused demands to step down immediately.

While he insists that he is "fed up" with leadership, he feels he must stay on until a presidential September presidential election in order to ensure stability.

The crisis has tested US President Barack Obama's administration, forcing it to confront the consequences of Washington's long-term support for Middle East autocrats in exchange for security guarantees.

Obama reiterated his call Sunday for an "orderly" and "meaningful" transition in Egypt and said he wanted to see a "representative government" emerge. He did not press for Mubarak to stand down. AFP

Obama says Egypt forever changed

WASHINGTON—US President Barack Obama on Sunday called for a "representative government" in Egypt and said that regardless of when President Hosni Mubarak steps down the country had changed forever.

"The Egyptian people must freedom, they want a democracy, they want a representative government. We've said, you have to start a transition now," Obama told Fox television.

Pressed on whether President Hosni Mubarak was going to quit now, Obama replied: "Only he knows what he's going to do. Here's what we know is that Egypt is not going to go back to what it was." AFP

"He's not running for reelection. His term is up this year," he added.

In a landmark concession, Vice President Omar Suleiman agreed to sit down with the groups, which included the banned Muslim Brotherhood, but the talks produced no immediate breakthrough in the two-week-old standoff.

Some Western observers have expressed concern that the Brotherhood could emerge as power and institute an Islamist regime that would be no more democratic and might break Egypt's close alliance with Washington.

There are also anxieties, particularly in Israel, that even if the Brotherhood, Egypt could adopt a much more hostile stance toward the Jewish state, even tearing up their 1979 peace treaty, signed after four wars.

Obama stressed that Egyptian society was wider than just the Muslim Brotherhood but admitted some of their promises were a concern. AFP

Egyptians struggle to regain normalcy

CAIRO—Egyptians desperate for cash lined up at newly reopened banks and Cairo's infamous traffic jams reappeared as the capital struggled to regain a sense of normalcy after weeks of turmoil.

But hulking battle tanks on the streets and nervous citizens search groups manning barricades at night were vivid reminders that the crisis was far from over, with thousands of protesters still demanding the ouster of the president.

"It's much better than yesterday or the day before, ordinary people are back out walking around and look, we even have a traffic jam," Ahmed Mohammed, 40, the owner of a men's clothing store on Arab League St., a major commercial thoroughfare in the upscale commercial district of Mohandiseen, said on Sunday.

Cairo, a city of 18 million people, drowned in a near standstill over a week ago after widespread looting and arson battles broke out in a mass social breakdown of security amid mass protests demanding the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak and police abandoned their posts.

Businesses closed and traffic was largely absent as residents holed up at home and faced a curfew that at one point started at 3 p.m., shrinking off a city once renowned for never sleeping. The curfew start has since been relaxed to 7 p.m.

Most stores were open on Sunday for the first time in days, although some were boarded up with signs saying they were "closed due to looting," across the 11 lane divided road from Mohammed's store were the burnt-out remains of a police station and a duty free shop.

Traffic also had returned to its normal sluggish rush hour flow in many parts of the city, allied with a dearth of traffic police.

"We want reform to continue but with a return to normal life," added Ahmed, echoing the sentiments of many across a city that still wants change, while desperately yearning for the end to the unrest.

Many Egyptians have been unable to access their bank accounts and ATMs rapidly emptied of cash or were attacked by looters. Employers said they couldn't pay end of the month salaries and food prices soared.

The government reopened a limited number of banks for three hours on Sunday, prompting a desperate rush for cash and long lines at the financial institutions.

"There's a surreal feeling in all of this—almost like time stood still and we were trapped in a nightmare," Zakariya el-Sayed, a 29-year old marketing manager waiting to withdraw money from a bank in the upscale Zamalek district. AP

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Empire East offers P14B** for Food Terminal site /B2

■ **Forex reserves hit new** high of $63.6B in Jan. /B3

Editor Raul O. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez

BUSINESS

Electricity bills to rise this month

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
Feb. 7, 2011
43.630

STOCK MARKET
Feb. 7, 2011
7.68

Stocks edge higher

LOCAL STOCKS were a tad higher yesterday as bargain hunters started scavenging—albeit in a selective—after their brief retreat in the last two weeks.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index added 7.68 points or about 0.1 percent to close at 5,880.63.

The modest index gain was led by the financial, industrial, holding firms and mining and oil counters while property and services traded in the red.

Dubai turmoil was still the at P3.98 billion. Advancers and decliners exchanged 49:41 for the day while 42 stocks were unchanged.

Investors traded Blue chips, Bank, Bdo, Pl, Of, Lepanto and Rexlots Rev'd.

Megaworld, COL, DMCI, Ayala and MBO with caution.

On the other hand, there was bargain hunting in stocks Fren in Alliance Global, Ayala Asia, SM Investments, Semirara Mining, Empire East Land, Atlas Consolidated and Oriental Peninsular.

Value investor remained evasive, even as most of emerging Asian markets 'snapped' Monday after the Lunar New Year holidays.

Credit Agricole said "risk on" mood would likely attract equity flows into the region especially as investors' their non-confidence and contraction year-to-date. India and the Philippines, and to some degree also Indonesia and Thailand. Inflows into equity markets are seen as positive for currencies. **Dan C. Bacalso**

Meralco blames higher generation charge

By Amy R. Borra

CUSTOMERS OF Manila Electric Co. should gear for higher electricity bills this month as the generation charge rose 11.84 centavos a kilowatt-hour (kWh) to P4.8823 in February.

The increase means that households consuming about 100 kWh a month have to pay P1,134 more this month, while those consuming 200 kWh will have to bear with a P23.68 increase in their monthly bills. Households consuming 300 kWh can expect a P35.52 jump in their February bills.

Meralco explained in a statement that the higher electricity rates this month had been triggered by the lower dispatch of electricity output from its independent power producers, given a decrease in power demand last month. This resulted in higher power costs.

"The utilization level of the IPPs fell below 80 percent for the first time since April 2010 as Meralco's peak demand were down by more than 200 megawatts to 4,607 MW due to cooler temperatures," the utility firm explained.

However, Meralco stressed that despite the increase in the cost of power sourced from the IPPs, these facilities remained to be the company's cheapest source of electricity.

The distribution utility buys from three IPPs—Quezon Power Philippines Ltd.'s coal-fired facility, the 1,000-megawatt Sta. Rita to and the 500-MW San Lorenzo natural gas-fired power plants, which are both owned by the Lopez-led First Gas Holdings.

Meanwhile, the increase in the IPP costs were partly offset by a P1.56-per-kWh reduction in the effective Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) price billed on Meralco in January, which was the basis of the February generation charge.

Similarly, the cost of power sourced from state-run National Power Corp. fell 1.43 centavos a kWh, helping offset the increases in IPP costs.

According to Meralco, it sourced 66.8 percent of its electricity requirements from Napocor last month, 46.4 percent from the IPPs and only 7 percent from the WESM.

The increase in power bills this February followed two months of successive decreases in the generation charge, amounting to a combined 55 centavos a kWh, first in December 2010 to January 2011.

Despite the latest upward adjustment, Meralco noted that the February generation charge still registered a lower rate compared to those recorded last year, except during the months of January and October.

Meralco reiterated that the generation charge was entirely a pass-through charge and did not accrue or gain Meralco. The cost of electricity sold by the power

BANKRUPTCY B2

Treasury rejects all bids for 91-day bills

By Bernie W. Damicog

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday rejected all bids for the benchmark treasury bills as buyers sought rate increases averaging 2.3 percentage points.

However, the Bureau of the Treasury awarded fully its offered volume for the 182- and 364-day bills.

And the Treasury accepted the bids for the 91-day bills, the yield would have gone up by 230.6 basis points to an average 5 percent. The yield for the benchmark bills at the last successful auction was 0.7 percent.

National Treasurer Roberto S. Tan said the accepted bids for the 182- and 364-day debt papers were lower than the 3.1 percent and 4.1 percent rates prevailing in the secondary market.

However, Tan said tenders for the benchmark bills was higher than the 23,021 percent for the same duration at Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp.

"If we accepted, the resulting average yield for the 91-day bill would have been higher than that for the 182-day bill," he said.

In yesterday's primary market auction, yield on the 182-day bills went up 134.3 basis points to an average 2.905 percent.

Yield on the 364-day bills rose 79.4 basis points to an average 3.25 percent.

Tuesday's "auction results are simply following an orderly adjustment of interest rates," Tan said. "With these results and moving on, we expect the market to be more consistent with market conditions and forecasts on inflation."

TREASURY B2

Empire East offers ₱14B for Food Terminal site

By Doris C. Dumlao

EMPIRE EAST Land Holdings Inc., the middle-income residential property arm of Tycoon Andrew Tan, has offered to acquire from the government the 100-hectare Food Terminal Inc. complex in Taguig for ₱14 billion.

"The offer was made in line with recent news reports that the central administration will privatize the redevelopment of the FTI property," the company disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Monday.

"Given its total confidence in the administration of President Aquino, Empire East wishes to participate in the planned privatization together with potential partners who are keen on investing in this country on the strength of the new administration's commitment to transparency," the disclosure said.

Based on last year's appraisal, the FTI property was valued at ₱12.48 billion, but earlier attempts to privatize the asset at that price had failed.

The Department of Finance has indicated renewed interest to privatize the property, but said the floor price of ₱12 billion was no longer acceptable given the upswing in local property values.

Given its strong balance sheet, Empire East feels that it is in a position to develop the property.

"Empire East has a strong balance sheet. It is practically debt-free. It is in a strong position to raise funds for the project," said John Piez, investor relations officer of Empire East's parent company, Megaworld Corp.

FTI, which is liquidating its mixed-use development, has also generated interest from other property firms such as Robinsons Land Corp., Ayala Land Inc., SM Mighael Properties Inc. and DM Investments Inc.

FTI is one of the largest industrial complexes in Metro Manila.

The agro-industrial-commercial estate was envisioned to encourage the entry of private entrepreneurs and investors to establish the necessary atmosphere essential to the development of the complex.

Parcels of land under the complex are also designated as a special economic zone.

Current portions of the complex are still occupied by tenants, some of which hold long-term lease contracts that will expire in 2015.

Ayala Land, Robinsons also interested

Globe gets ₱7B from BDO

By Paolo G. Montecillo

AYALA-LED Globe Telecom Inc. is borrowing ₱7 billion from Banco de Oro Unibank (BDO) for the refinancing of maturing obligations and to fund expansion projects in 2011.

In a disclosure, the country's second largest telecommunications firm said it wanted to take advantage of low interest rates offered by banks today.

"We intend to use the BDO facility to fund our capital expenditure (capex) requirements this year and prepay up to ₱3 billion in loans that will regularly mature in 2012," said short- de Leon-led, Globe Telecom's chief finance officer.

"The current low interest rate environment allows us to replace these loans with cheaper debt, generating savings for the company," he said.

This is the first loan facility that Globe signed this year.

Last year, the company had a capex of about ₱8B billion. Globe CEO Ernest Cu had said the firm planned to spend about the same amount this year.

The company posted an income in the January to September period of ₱20.43 billion, down 26 percent from ₱9.6 billion in the same period in 2009.

For the third quarter alone, the company's profit reached ₱5.09 billion, 23 percent down from ₱6.6 billion in the third quarter of 2009.

Globe is the country's second largest player from said to a joint venture between local conglomerate Ayala Corp. and Singapore's SingTel.

SMC revenues seen to hit ₱1T by 2016

By Doris L. Luces

SAN MIGUEL Corp. will more than double its revenue this year by consolidating some of its core acquisitions in the energy and petroleum business into the parent firm, marking a turning point for the company from being foods conglomerate's biggest food firm into a fully diversified conglomerate.

In an interview with the business San Miguel president Ramon Ang said that the company's revenue for 2011 may reach ₱570.6 billion, from only ₱260 billion last year.

"This is just from consolidating the four power companies...the four power companies—that's Ilijan, Ilijan, Sta. Rita, Sta. Rita," he said. "We have set very much aside our other businesses yet like telecommunications, mining, coal infrastructure and Meralco."

Ang also reportedly that added that San Miguel was targeting to generate revenue to the ₱1 trillion mark by 2016.

"In five years, the food business will hopefully comprise only 30 percent of our total sales," he said, explaining that the balance of 60 percent should ideally come from its investments in the energy, petroleum and infrastructure businesses.

According to Ang, his five-year goal is for San Miguel's revenue mix—ranked by contribution to the conglomerate in five years...to be made up of energy and power, infrastructure and to traditional food business.

Gaining other listed companies majority control, San Miguel became the country's largest conglomerate in terms of market capitalization due to a surge in share prices last year, eclipsing similar measures for the Ayala group and the SM group.

Ang explained that of the projected ₱570 billion in revenue this year, only ₱214 billion will come from the conglomerate's traditional food and beverage businesses.

"All in all, new businesses will contribute around ₱356 billion for the year, from Petron and the four generating plants," he said, explaining that about ₱60 billion of this will come from Petron Corp., which is the country's largest petroleum refiner and distributor.

The rest will come from its infrastructure companies—the toll roads, the Ilijan, Sta. Rita, San Roque and Limay power plants.

At the same time, the San Miguel chief said that the company would also have to invest to expand the capacities of its recent acquisitions, especially Petron, which he explained holds great potential if its refinery could be retooled to take advantage of higher value petrochemical ingredients of its operations.

	Peso-denominated bonds with fixed interest rates	Dollar-denominated bonds with fixed interest rates
ISSUER/ISSUE NAME	Net Asset Value Per Unit	
	2010	2009
ABS-CBN Bond	1.1904	1.1904
BPI/Philam Bond	Unavailable	Unavailable
BPI/Philam Bond	Unavailable	Unavailable
BPI Philam Managed Income Fund	1.1979	1.1891
BPI/Philam Bond	Unavailable	Unavailable
BPI Philam Managed Income Fund	1.1982	1.1898

ISSUER/ISSUE NAME	Net Asset Value Per Unit	
	2010	2009
Ayala Treasury Bond Fund	10.5132	10.3141
Ayala Bond Rediviva Fund	107.38	107.42

Treasury ...

From page B1

In a related development, Singapore-based OBS Bank said in recently issued research note that the spread premium on Philippine bond yields was expected to remain even as monetary authorities continued to act to increase policy rates.

BSP Bank and Philippine bond yields were likely to rise this year considering that yields on 10-year debt papers "remain substantially below their decades long average of 10.6 percent and sufficiently premium are on the rise."

"Hikes in the policy rate are not inconsistent, but [an increase] here this year cannot be ruled out," OBS added.

While the central bank of Indonesia having increased its policy rates late last week, the Philippines remained the only Asian country that has not raised borrowing costs.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has kept its policy rates at historic lows of 4 percent for overnight borrowing and 6 percent for overnight lending.

Electricity

From page B1

ing companies could move from month-to-month based on some factors beyond its control, among them fuel prices, the deposits of the DTIs. The Energy Regulatory rate and 40,000 points.

The generation charge, which is the electricity bill's biggest component, averages about 60 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) of the electricity's average monthly power bill. The rest directly to Meralco's power suppliers.

PLDT VOX CARAVAN CHARMS THE CORPORATE CLIENTS OF BULACAN!

PLDT Corporate Business Group, headed by its SVP & Head of North Luzon Corporate Business Solutions Group, Teresita Magbanua, initiated the "Vox Caravan" – a month-long corporate roadshow that PLDT VOX is conducting in key provinces in Luzon. The Vox Caravan is PLDT VOX's way to engage Wireless Service providers and Managed Service providers in order to provide them with knowledge in migrating and evolving into Hosted and Managed Services providing with all-Wireless voice providers. Aimed at creating a partnership culture. For the clients, full appreciation of the Hosted PLDT VOX solutions services. Pictured here are Corporate Business Solutions Group Head Teresita Magbanua (3rd from right), Bulacan Head for Corporate Business Solutions Group Head Ernesto Cruz (4th from right), and Bulacan Head for various PLDT Solutions and Services Executives.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

COMMODITIES

Commodity	Unit	Close Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
Crude Oil	Barrel	91.4617	1.000000	43.7500
Brent	Bbl	1.000000	0.010933	0.4783
Unleaded Gasoline	Gallon	2.940000	0.032144	1.4063
Heating Oil	Gallon	2.940000	0.032144	1.4063
Gasoil (Low Sulfur)	Barrel	1.000000	0.010933	43.8000
Gasoil	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoline	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Naphtha	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Natural Gas	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoil (Low Sulfur)	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoil	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoline	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Naphtha	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Natural Gas	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoil (Low Sulfur)	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoil	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoline	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Naphtha	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Natural Gas	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoil (Low Sulfur)	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoil	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoline	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Naphtha	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Natural Gas	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoil (Low Sulfur)	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoil	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Gasoline	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Naphtha	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000
Natural Gas	Barrel	0.000000	0.000000	0.0000

Forex reserves hit new high of $63.6B in Jan.

Strong inflows mainly from foreign currency deposits, BSP's foreign exchange operations

By Raoul W. Dominguez

TETANGCO

THE PHILIPPINES' gross international reserves climb to yet another record high of $63.6 billion as of end-January, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco Jr. said the figure was higher by $1.2 billion than the $62.4 billion registered in the previous month.

The increase, Tetangco said, could be attributed mainly to strong foreign exchange inflows from the government's foreign currency deposits of proceeds from the seven issuance of 25-year global peso bonds, the BSP's foreign exchange operations and overseas investments.

Tetangco said the inflows were partially offset by payments for maturing foreign exchange obligations of the government and revaluation losses on the BSP's gold holdings following the decrease in gold prices in the international market.

The BSP chief said foreign exchange reserves as of the end of January could cover 10.5 months worth of imports of goods and payment of services.

"It was also equivalent to 11.1 times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity and 5.5 times based on residual maturity," he added.

Further, the country's net international reserves or NIR—which include reserve values of reserve assets and reserve-related liabilities—also rose by $1.2 bil. lion to $63.6 billion.

The NIR refers to the difference between the BSP's gross international reserves and total short-term liabilities.

Last month, the BSP said it would remain conservative in managing the country's reserves of foreign currencies, saying new inflow would still be invested in virtually risk-free assets.

Bottom of the country's gross international reserves (GIR) are invested in sovereign bonds, mostly US treasuries.

Multilateral institutions such as the Asian Development Bank hold securities with more than enough reserves but chose to stay conservative in managing the money were losing opportunities to further boost their economies.

Trading position after the Chinese New Year

MARKET RIDER

Dave Sonnerya

THE CHINESE Lunar New Year, this year was celebrated locally in an uncharacteristic fashion last week. It was a big letdown instead of being an exciting event that it had always been before.

Still present were the ubiquitous loud fireworks and shining dragon dances. Yet, in this year's celebrations, they rarely lulled us to surmount a festive mood that spans existing market reflex and fabulous stock plays. Has they should in defying evil spirits and surmounting good fortune.

And, like the changing times, the Chinese Lunar New Year this year seems to have lost its sting—hopefully only this time.

To the 3,500 level or not

As of the close of trading last Friday, the market's benchmark index, or the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi), was down by another 97.89 points at 3,871.35 from the 3,976.34 closing the week before.

Not entirely unexpected, this performance of the market in the current celebration of the local Chinese Lunar New Year was heavily downcasting.

If the market had gone below the critical 4,000 level of the benchmark index long before the celebration, the aftermath of the event could substantially paint the index toward the next market support at 3,900.

Come to think of it, this can very well happen based on the market's movement at least three weeks ago, and before overdosed by last week's market behavior.

Except for last Wednesday's trading results, the day before the celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year, the market had indeed been in a flutter.

As you can see by the daily quotation report, the market opened on Monday at 3,992.11, which was 27.19 points lower than the 3,979.34 closing index the week before. When trading finally closed for the day last Monday, the shutdown was down 88.57 points at 3,891.47.

The index was pushed further down to the 3,800.47 level at the end of trading on Tuesday for an additional loss of 56.99 points. In three two days, the market was already down 130.56 points compared to the market's closing index the week before.

This would have proven large if by the end of the week was not for the positive results of trading on Wednesday in anticipation of the shutdown of the Chinese Lunar New Year.

To finish the review of the market last week, the benchmark index fell 2.52 points on Thursday the first day of the Chinese Lunar New Year. Volume and value turnover were lower at 1.56 billion shares and P3.47 billion.

The successive decline in the market index was further followed by a similar drop of the index on Friday, where the benchmark index fell 56.2 points more to end at the 3,872.35 level.

Interesting at this time, though, was the fact that total value turnover had dramatically fell to P2.83 billion on a similar weekend volume of 2.46 billion shares.

Bottom-line spin

Taking into consideration these matters, the picture of the market could be both negative and positive.

On the negative side, the market has fallen below the market's strength that no longer be three-bounce market momentum had weakened. Therefore, the market can fall further, down to the 3,500 level, according to some.

On the positive side, the ratio decrease in volume and value turnover last Friday could also be indicative of the fact that so-called weaker hands could have been flushed out of the market, finally.

Therefore, the smaller volume and value turnover of last Friday's trading results can as well be interpreted that a majority of the market is now in the hands of the so-called stronger hands. hands that won't roll down further to the present market index level.

But one long ups, the market had been hoping at the 4,000 level and selling at, more or less, the 4,200 level. Due to intervening market factors, the market finally chose to let go and sell all the way down up to where it was upto last Friday.

This week could be interesting. The market may finally show the direction of its drift, that is, if it will head further down to the 3,500 level or not.

Don't get too strong. I am not giving up on the market. I remain bullish. I believe the market will make a turnaround.

So, for those who have been asking if it's already a "buy" because of the already low stock prices, my answer is still the same. "Wait"—even if this will mean that I have to buy at higher prices if I am wrong.

My reason is that, even if the current prices of most stocks with fundamentals may have already settled to their true values, I still believe their market play will only materialize further down in the year when they have accumulated dividend values that are not considered in their current pricing.

As it is said in value investing, "only birds may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese."

(The may reach the Market Rider at marketrider@inquirer.com.ph or at davesonnerya@yahoo.com)

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Plan
Benjamin

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY and to BID

Plan International Inc., an international, humanitarian, non-government child centered development organization is inviting all interested suppliers/contractors to participate in our forthcoming bidding. ONLY PLAN ACCREDITED VENDORS shall be invited to participate in the BIDDING for the procurement of various school supplies to Plan central areas in Quezon.

(TABLE FOR BIDDING (Personalized))

Notebooks
Notepads
Pencil
Lumber/Board
Regular Monoprice 2
Bulletin
Crayons (12Pc)
Rulers plastic (12Pc)
Eraser Big, rubber
Sharpener Heavy duty
Art Paper

Interested suppliers are requested to submit a **Letter of Intent** together with the following valid and/or updated pre-qualification documents either **original** or **color scan certified photocopy**: 1. Latest Business Permit, 2. BIR Registration, 3. Latest Income Tax Return, 4. Audited Income Statement – Independent Auditor, 5. Business Entity Certificate of Accreditation or its equivalent from any reputable institutions, (if any) 6. Bank Certificate and 7. List of clients with similar projects delivered, to:

THE Bidding Awards Committee (BAC) CHAIRPERSON
Plan International Inc
(if Ilaraglan Building, Avenida Veterano
Tacloban City

The Bidding Awards Committee (BAC) will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for bidding. All pre-qualified prospective bidders shall be NOTIFIED by the office through telephone and electronic letters to secure all the necessary Bidding Guidelines, Specifications, Designs and other information relative to the bidding.

Deadline for the submission of pre-qualification documents shall be on **February 21, 2011, Friday, 5:00pm** at **Plan International Inc. (if Ilaraglan Building, Avenida Veterano, Tacloban City.**

Pre-Bidding Conference and Bidding shall be at **Plan International Inc. at (if Ilaraglan Building, Avenida Veterano, Tacloban City on a date to be announced later.**

At the Bidding, each bidder shall submit in a sealed envelope its proposal together with five percent (5%) bid deposit on the bid bid price either in cash or cashier or manager's check. A ten percent (10%) performance bond of the said contract price is required for the winning bidder either in cash or cashier or manager's check.

Plan reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare the bidding a failure or waive any or all informalities or to award the contract to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to Plan International Inc. The decision of the BAC is final and binding.

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ALABANG PACIFIC VILLAGE

LOT Area sq.m. Frontage Building Type Unit Price Down Pay
BLK 1 LOT 1 [illegible] 2-STOREY [illegible]
BLK 1 LOT 2 [illegible] 2-STOREY [illegible]
BLK 1 LOT 3 [illegible] 2-STOREY [illegible]
BLK 1 LOT 4 [illegible] 2-STOREY [illegible]
BLK 1 LOT 5 [illegible] 2-STOREY [illegible]
BLK 1 LOT

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2011 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER C1

LIFESTYLE Wellness

Filipino women have lowest bone health in Asia

OSTEOPOROSIS is a sneaky, silent disease—there are no signs or symptoms in the early stages until a fracture occurs, often accompanied by intense back pain and loss of height.

By Irene C. Perez

THERE ARE many supplements on the market that promise to take care of one's liver, heart, brain; improve blood flow; make skin look poreless. But how about bone health?

A recent study presented in Singapore by the International Osteoporosis Society and Frontera, makers of Anlene Milk, showed that Filipinos—men and women—have the lowest bone health in Asia.

Judy Kennard, IOF chief operating officer, listed some alarming facts in "The Asian Audit & Spinal Fracturers Report": "Diminishing bone health can be detected as early as 25 years old; by 55, one in three people will be classified as 'at risk of developing osteoporosis'; one in three women over 50 will experience fractures; and by 2050, 50 percent of all osteoporotic fractures will occur in Asia."

Osteoporosis "is a disease in which bone becomes brittle and fragile from loss of minerals like calcium. Bone loss occurs 'silently' and progressively. There are no symptoms until the first fracture occurs, usually to the hip, spine and wrist," said Joanne Todd, senior health platform manager for Fonterra Asia and Middle East.

Dr. Hazel Silverman, in his research "Preserving the Virility of Asian Seniors," called it "bone stroke." The problem gets worse because most Asians think only Westerners get the disease.

"There are no symptoms, so it is not diagnosed until there is a fracture," Symcock said, adding that the number of hip fracture reports have gone up threefold in most Asian countries in the last 20 years. "Bone mass have resulted in hospitalization, with 26 persons ending in fatalities and 50 percent in permanent disability.

One out of five people who get hip fracture dies within six months. And if preventions isn't practiced, one out of three women, and one out of five men over 50, would have a fracture. For women, a fracture means more days spent in the hospitals than if they had diabetes or breast cancer.

Why Asians?

Filipino adults take less than half of the required daily calcium need—that's 600 mg instead of the 1,000-1,3000 mg a day recommended allowance of the World Health Organization. Asians are not milk drinkers, either, which is a primary source of calcium needed to maintain good bones.

Lastly, they don't get as much vitamin D, too, which is necessary for calcium absorption.

Symcock attributes this to two things: "There are hardly dairy farms in the region, and Asians are mostly lactose intolerant."

Filipinos, especially are wary of the costs of milk, and later on hospitalization when hip fracture occurs, leaving a untreated or diminishing it as a normal aged-old aging.

Factors that cause osteoporosis include age, body build, medication, smoking and excessive alcohol intake, hormonal imbalances and premature menopause.

Free bone scans

Todd promises in another study, "6 percent of bone health is data," how Anlene has helped educate Asians about osteoporosis. Anlene, through its program 'Anlene Bone Health Check,' has given over four million scans since 2000, serving 2.1 million people.

It is done using the GE Healthcare Lunar Achilles machine, which is approved by the US. The procedure is as easy as putting one's foot down on the machine, which then measures the foot in between two small "balloons." The results are printed within seconds.

From the bone scans done in three years, it was found out that bone health is worsen

Diminishing bone health can be detected as early as 25 years old

FOR MEN ONLY:
LOSE YOUR BEER BELLY, *BILBIL*, LOVE HANDLES *QUICK AND EASY*

Having a beer belly only proves you're not in great shape. Your body is unhealthy and that makes you less attractive. Love handles and *bilbil* don't make things any less of a worry. These can lead to abdominal obesity if you don't take preventive measures. Don't wait for diabetes, high blood pressure, erectile dysfunction, heart disease or stroke to happen to you. At Marie France FOR MEN, you lose the fat and gain a healthier body – quickly, effortlessly and painlessly.

Q: What causes beer belly, love handles and bilbil?
A: Despite the name, beer isn't the main culprit behind a beer belly. Men typically gain weight in the belly and waist areas first. Lack of physical activity, fatty foods, slow metabolism and an unhealthy lifestyle all contribute to having a beer belly. Love handles and *bilbil* are early signs that fat is beginning to accumulate in your abdominal and back areas. This is your cue to take fast action.

Q: What fat-busting solution do you offer?
A: CoolSculpting, FOR MEN's latest US-FDA approved treatment, eliminates fat cells in your targeted areas and reshapes your body at the same time. Clinical studies have shown a 22.4% fat reduction in the problem area after a single session. You can do this during your lunch break and still have time to get a quick bite after.

Q: How does this treatment work?
A: CoolSculpting uses the Zeltiq advanced cooling technology that weakens, shrinks and eliminates fat cells in the targeted areas. The fat is eliminated through natural metabolic processes, so there is no need to worry about pain or downtime. At FOR MEN, treatments are all non-invasive and don't require recovery period.

Q: So what results can I expect from this treatment?
A: After you complete your program, expect a flatter, lighter and better-looking stomach. CoolSculpting will visibly reduce your love handles, *bilbil* and other fat bulges. You will be free of ugly fat once and for all.

Look lighter, healthier, leaner with our fat-busting program!
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Lose the stubborn bulges with CoolSculpting
Fasten tummy bulges
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GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

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DICK TRACY

LOVEBIRDS — BY ELIZABETH HOHONGLO

BABY BLUES — BY JERRI SCOTT

KIKO MACHINE — BY RYAN ABRERA

SEPH — BY DANIEL SHELTON

Eyra

SHERMAN'S LAGOON — BY JIM TOOMEY

TULDOK — BY MARA COLL

Laying/watching op drama sa 5/10 AM 10:00 AM 1:00 PM Lotes hanggang Byernes

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCE CRAWE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Your magnificent mane is more than usual today, because the Moon is in your sign. However, when this happens, it often makes you a bit bolder than all the other signs. Yay!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) This is a good day to work on some artistic trait for yourself. It's been a bit exhausting lately dealing with tedious and hyper-hard people.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Encounters with priests, especially a family member of a priest, will be important for you today. Perhaps if you told someone what you have to confess, they will help you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Encounters of any sexual kind today will be unpleasant. Make a list and start to cross items off. Your list also might include ways to improve your health. How about it?

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Eye is in something different today. You feel a bit restless because you want to learn something new. Perhaps you've never been before. You need a change of scenery!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Procrastination about starved energy, excessive materials, stress, fear and anything you can't smile with out there and you will today. "Rock your boat."

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 23) Someone takes a liking to you today and you will have to go back that feeling when you're dealing with others. They are unaware you want to be noticed, publicly and separately. (No biggie.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 to Nov. 21) You're the perfect size to put today organized. Make a list and start to cross items off. Your list also might include ways to improve your health. How about it?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Focus on sports, playful activities with children, the arts and the entertainment world today. In fact, if you can, this is the perfect day to go to a flick and splurge.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Home, family and intimate relations are your focus today. Reconnect with a parent, loved one or your mother's tradition significant.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) This is a lucky day for all people, (but) stay and be cautious with dangerous people and go with the flow.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Focus on finances today. Make friends with your bank account. If necessary, keep your receipts and be aware of your cash flow.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3×3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more puzzles and programs go to www.sudoku.com

Answers to previous puzzle

8	3	1	4	5	9	2	6	7
4	9	6	2	7	8	1	3	5
5	7	2	1	6	3	4	8	9
6	1	5	3	8	7	9	4	2
9	4	8	5	2	6	3	7	1
3	2	7	9	4	1	8	5	6
1	6	4	8	3	5	7	2	9
2	5	9	7	1	4	6	9	3
7	8	3	6	9	2	5	1	4

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

	9		1			5		
7				2				
			6	5				2
5		4			3			
	8	6		9		2	4	
			2			3		8
6				8	1			
				6				9
		3			4		6	

Difficulty Level ★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

SM City Cebu holds Run for Sight marathon

(L-R) SM Philip Lorrenzini, Donna Cruz-Lorrenzini, Dr. Yong Lorrenzini of Run for Sight Foundation Inc., Cebu City mall operations management chief Jack Johnston, SM Prime Holdings vice president Marissa N. Ferrer, Radisson Blu Hotel general manager Grant Dadds and Arnold Chuachuy.

SM CITY Cebu, with Run for Sight Foundation, Inc. and Lorrenzini Eye Group, will hold one of the biggest runs in Cebu on Feb. 23.

Organizers are offering 5,000 slots for the race. 600 runners for 21 km, 800 for 10 km and 3,600 for the rest of the categories.

The run will start and end at the Northwing of SM City Cebu. It will pass through the South Road Properties going to the property of SM Prime Holdings where a new SM mall and development will soon rise.

Race categories include 3 km, 6 km, 12 km and 21 km. It will also feature a 6-km and 12-km Radisson Blu Road Complete Guimarey. Prizes include P50,000, P20,000 and P15,000 for the first, second and third placers respectively in the 21 km male and female category. The 4th to 10th placers will receive P5,000 SM gift certificates.

The placers in the 12 km male and female category will bring home P30,000 each, while the second placers will each receive P7,000. Third placers will get P5,000 while the fourth to fifth placers will receive P3,000 worth of SM gift certificates. All 21-km finishers will receive a medal from Run for Sight Foundation.

Winners in the 6 km male and female category will take home P5,000 each, while second placers will get P3,000 each and third placers will win P2,000 each.

The run will feature the 12 km and 6 km Radisson Blu Road Complete Category. The couple who will win in the 6 km Complete Category will win a gift certificate for an overnight stay for two with breakfast at Radisson Blu Hotel. The second and third placers will win an overnight stay for two at Radisson Blu Ha. tel with breakfast plus P5,000 and P3,000 SM gift certificates respectively.

Awarding of winners is at the Northwing atrium where premium items from mall tenants and other sponsors will be raffled off. All finishers will receive an eco-friendly bag from SM City Cebu filled with goodies.

The awarding will also highlight a fun performance by the Cebu's Renaissance band with their role-mates.

Registration fee is at P500 for 21 km, P300 for 12 km, and P300 for 6 km and 3 km. Proceeds will help fund the charity work of Run for Sight Foundation, Inc.

Registration is ongoing at the Greater Eye Sight at Cebu Doctors' University Hospital, CAPITOL Site at the Cebu Doctors' University, also Goodyear Servitek in Basak, Mandaue City, and at the first level of the Northwing fronting SM.

Preparing food at home can help you save calories–and money

By Mia Felipa Montoya
Contributor

Why spend P100 for a 500-calorie sandwich when you can spend P20 for a 250-calorie homemade version?

IF YOU want to manage your weight, then you should think about saving calories. Saving money by cooking simpler and healthier versions of food you love to eat is a bonus. If you always have time to eat out, then you can also make time to prepare your favorite foods. These 900-calorie meals are becoming popular nowadays, as shown in some health books like "Took This, Not That" by David Zinczenko and "The 400-Calorie Fix" by Liz Vaccariello. Saving means with less than 500 calories per serving.

Most have are some affordable, healthy and tasty meals that you can always try at home for a healthier version. Cheaper and eliminate body. Just three servings of each of the following meals can help you lose weight the healthy way without the need for fad diets. You can just eat fruits between meals.

Pasta meals

Pasta in your favorite restaurants can cost more than P150 and the serving portion is usually doubled with more calories from the white or oily sauces, cheese and meat balls. Most of the pasta dishes that you can order when you dine out may contain 800 to 1,300 calories per serving especially if you order spaghetti with meatballs, lasagna, and carbonara or alfredo pasta. Most pasta dishes also lack protein, which is important to make you feel fuller longer.

Cooking your own pasta can help you cut calories in half and gives you a chance to eat a well-balanced meal complete with carbohydrates, protein, fat and vegetables. It takes about 15-20 minutes to prepare everything.

- Boil pasta noodles for 10 minutes and drain. Measure a cup of cooked pasta and set aside (208 calories).
- For protein, choose a serving size (the size of a deck of cards) of chicken, shrimp, squid, or fish, and you can grill, roast, or sauté it with onion and garlic (100-150 calories).
- For vegetables like mushroom, asparagus, onion, tomatoes, peppers, or eggplant and flavor them with dried flakes, grated parmesan cheese, parsley, or basil leaves (30 calories).
- Add tomato sauce and limit oil based sauces like plain olive oil or basil pesto to two tablespoons (100-200 calories). If you prefer a cream sauce, limit the amount and/or use light cream, butter and milk.

Sandwiches

Grab a sandwich from the most popular coffee shops and delis, and it will cost you more than P100. You can also consume more than 500 calories because of its size; sandwich spreading, and oil of choices, butter and oil. Creating your own sandwich is an easy way to have a satisfying meal in mind, and for only P30 to P50 per serving and 250-400 calories per sandwich. You just need to get a tasty and filling bread, some leafy veggies, and a serving of protein with a teaspoon of spread or a thin slice of cheese.

- Prepare 1-2 pieces of regular sliced whole wheat bread, English muffin, or whole-grain bread (80-160 calories).
- Make your protein filling like a grilled, boiled skinless chicken breast, canned tuna, boiled egg, or pan-fried fish fillet that you can also prepare in advance. You can also have lean beef slices like roast beef or lean ground beef if you want red meat. The vegetable ingredients for beef or pork like mushrooms and onions to save more calories. Stay away from deep-fried and breaded fillings. Use just a serving size of protein (the size of a deck of cards) for the whole sandwich (120-160 calories).
- Add leafy vegetables (lettuce, arugula, watercress) and tomatoes with pesto, salsa, low-fat mayonnaise, mustard, or a slice of thin cheese (50 calories).

Rice meals

When you eat out, a rice meal can cost you at least P300 and 600-1,000 calories per meal. The good news is that you can make a 400- to 500-calorie rice meal with all the rice, vegetables and protein and spend only P20-P50 per serving. The trick here is to watch your way of cooking. Avoid oily, creamy sauces, do not deep fry, and remove visible skin and fat of meat and chicken.

- Use a measuring cup for your rice. If you eat brown rice, you can even have two. Only a cup since it's much more filling than regular white rice, but they still have the same amount of calories (208 calories).
- Get at least a cup of raw leafy vegetables, like a salad serving or half-cup to a cup of cooked vegetables like spinach, malunggay, lettuce, tomatoes, asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, or spinach. Use low-oil for the cooked veggies, about a teaspoon (50-100 calories).
- When you cook your meat, limit oil and sauces and try to bake, boil, steam, grill, roast, or saute instead of deep-frying. Choose chicken, seafood and lean cuts of beef and pork. Eat only a serving size of protein for your meal, which is about a size of your palm since protein intake depends on one's size, as well (150-250 calories).

E-mail the author at mmfelipe@gmail.com.

Indigenous treatments bring back the old healing arts

Traditional therapies from different regions offer a lot more than your ordinary massage–they bring centuries of tradition as well

SPARKLACE POP quiz: Where did the following treatments originate?

Lomi Lomi
Shiatsu
Champissage
Tuina

Indigenous treatments are a spa trend that highlight home-grown ingredients and therapeutic traditions of a specific country or region. Most often than not, we tend to look for these unique spa services rather than having the familiar ones during spa holidays abroad. It would be terribly disappointing to get all excited about a new place, only to find that it does not offer its own signature treatments.

The country has an array of treatments and healing arts that has long been passed on from one generation to another. Here are a few examples:

Arbe—the Philippines brand of bodywork is finding its way into the international scene, having won a fair amount of accolades from distinguished award-giving bodies. Arbe massage is a combination of long, deep strokes along the energy pathways to regulate circulation.

Pagdapay—a therapeutic foot massage that makes use bamboo sticks to stimulate the soles of the feet. This method intends to balance and loosen the body's energy system.

Dulot or nob—a ritual of natural post-partum care that uses steam infusion of dried aromatic herbs, usually done with cleansing and healing properties like cardong (Philippine camphorwood tanghal (lemon grass), from a basin of hot water, for about 10 minutes.

Betpot (Hand-down) means in Ilocos. This is a recommended custom of bathing in a lukewarm solution of boiled guava leaves, rich with astringent properties, before a treatment begins.

Oyayot or hilot—a collection of prayers. This folkloric ritual is usually done at the beginning of each session. It is a means of awarding all bad spirits and elements in the surroundings.

Coconut oil—considered to be the "the tree of life," every part of the coconut tree is useful, either as food, medicine, or for other practical purposes. The coconut oil, when used as a massage oil base, can help improve the appearance of skin with its cooling properties.

Usap—a very large tree found throughout the Philippines. It is used extensively as bark to cleanse and heal tonic. A herb of grape is rich in saponins, an effective natural cleansing agent.

There is a renewed interest in bringing back centuries-old healing arts. Spas use a lot of creativity to incorporate these indigenous ingredients, and come up with laudable treatments. Sometimes they're a little gimmicky, but are still pleasurable nonetheless.

As days have, indigenous treatments are deeply authentic, giving you astonishing experiences you couldn't have anywhere else. Rita de Leon Lomi massage by a skilled Hawaiian practitioner, a river rafting Shiatsu from Japan, a relaxing Champissage (head massage) from India, or an invigorating Tuina from China. These are, incidentally, the answers to the questions above. If you got it all right, then you are one true spa hobo!

Jolly Soumark, chief operating officer, International Osteoporosis Foundation; Joanne Todd, senior health platform manager for Fonterra Asia and Middle East, and Sparkjoie Ruo, Fonterra brand and category director

Filipino women have...

From page 11

rapidly declines by age 50-55.

Filipino and Indonesian women and Indonesian and Vietnamese men have the lowest bone health.

The decline is fastest among Vietnamese women. Indonesian and Singaporean women, meanwhile, have the best bone health.

New Zealand-based Fonterra launched Actimel in 1991, a milk drink/yogurt product to prevent bone loss. Amanda Lucas, Fonterra communications head, said it invested $50 million on research to understand and improve bone health, and has also partnered with the International Osteoporosis Foundation, which has branches in 14 Asian countries.

How to prevent osteoporosis

There is no single cure for osteoporosis, so it is best to practice prevention by maintaining calcium intake levels.

- Calcium is key. Make sure you have enough of it by consuming milk and milk products, green vegetables, soybeans, fish and fruits.
- It boosts of vitamin D can be had with exposure to early sunlight, fortified milk products, oily fish, egg yolks.
- Get enough proteins, zinc and magnesium from lean red meat, green veggies, nuts, soy and whole grain products.
- Quit smoking and consume moderate ideal body weight.
- Have regular bone scans.
- Avoid too much coffee, soda and vitamin A.

FIGHTING, which makes Andrea Rita, top glass first, pushes bone health scans as four million people in the past three years.

Are self-help books 'fast food for our personal problems'?

By Mario Casasi
Contributor

A lot of people my age have become discouraged by gurus who are known to make a quick buck. Still, we convince ourselves that we need them

THE BEGINNINGS of the self-help movement are arguably respectable. In the 1800s, there was a consciously effort by people who gathered for the goal of self-improvement. The movement now comes in the form of seminars, books, audiobooks, TV shows and deadly sweat lodges.

Edie Cavanagh's "How To Win Friends and Influence People" came out way back in the late '30s, and has sold around 15 million copies around the world.

Steve Salerno, author of "SHAM: How the Self-Help Movement Made America Helpless" (www.shamblog.com), defines the self-help movement as "an outgrowth of otherwise popular building the element of existential diagnosis...to basically normal people symptoms of inflated or invented maladies, so that they may then implement remedies that have never been shown to work."

Overly aggressive

A quick Google search brought me to Steve Pavlina's essay "Is Self-Help is Inane?" in his blog, Personal Development for Smart People. Pavlina had gone to attend an Anthony Robbins' seminar, where Robbins suffered a few matchbox sessions. While he knew it was of a "try before you buy" basis, he was disappointed when these coaches asked Pavlina and his wife "basic personal questions about our goals, and then used our answers against us in an overly-aggressive attempt to manipulate us into making a deposit to attend Tony's far more expensive 'Mastery University' seminars."

There are many other comments on the Internet claiming that Robbins does not possess the right medical or psychological credentials to be making the claims he is making. He has ripped people off. Yet he is no doubt one of the biggest names in self-help.

Self-help has been worrying fish from its early days, but skepticism is a good vein to regulate an otherwise unregulated industry. Whether or not it's true that self-help creates in us a kind of erstwhile neediness or creates the very problems we turn to it to solve, it's still a helpful tool for our mental woes. "Once in a while, when I'm at a low point, I grab a self-help book," my friend Ben, 20, explains. "It's a big deja-in-the-face."

I turned over the books on my bookshelf: obscure spine I've laced around the wall. They were in "self-esteem" and "learning yourself," things I had grappled with in my adolescence. They were not latest fancy bestsellers, but they worked for me. But a lot of them, like the one I had read, didn't give me any practical solutions.

Bernadette's paper on "Things Psychotherapists: The Public at Risk" wrote that self-help practitioners "invite users to take off their pants in front of strangers and tell improvement books" then also "continue to sell well to an anxious public."

What are have to do there to learn to discern between good "self-help" and useless "self-help."

There are disabilities, ranging from physical disabilities such as cataracts to mental disorders, that do require those self-help books.

There are undeniably useful how-to books whose sole purpose is address...those to play guitar, how to use computer software, how to start a business, how to have effective time management.

There are also books we need in certain times in our lives, such as how to cope with cancer or how to deal with a loved one. Their experience is slowly being wiped out by the books that promise everything and deliver nothing, making us come back to the bookshelf even more confused.

My friend Brianne, 23, puts it plainly: "I just don't listen to our parents, why would I ever listen to some middle-aged middle-American new-age dude who has no concept of the cultural identity of a middle-class teen from the Philippines?"

I do find there a lot of people my age have become discouraged by "self-help gurus" who are known to make a quick buck. A lot of us now dismiss self-help books because of some of the quick fixes that we know won't work. So how to find our cynical generation because of our ability to search engine controversies in five seconds.

In spite of my concerns, I know that at the end of the day, I would still willingly subject myself to the literature. (Ms)

My friend Gino, 25, describes the effect in such: "Self-help books feed you with assessments of yourself that you think are right because you identify with keywords. They're not necessarily correct, but they fit. It's in this way I find most self-help books have an air of lies, like they survive it for me." Maybe it helps that they feel like someone is speaking to them personally.

Steve adds, "I'm like Edward Norton in 'Fight Club,' when he becomes addicted to support groups after attending a testicular cancer session. I like the resistance. Once I see one of those newly released self-help books, I convince myself I need it. They are so fun to read. It's like free emotional personal problems."

Community level

There is a need for self-improvement, and some other sites have recognized those have taken self-help back to the community level.

The "It Gets Better" project, a YouTube broadcast made by people who created their experiences to combat young kids bullied for being queer, has become a quick response to the bullying and the consequent suicides of queer children and teenagers around the world.

A much older, wiser and calmer voice friend of mine has shown that seeking the right kind of self-help could actually work. While studying acting, the realization that I must free and conquer inner demons deepened. It's not just a matter of stresses and low self-esteem, a good old stage fright. Just now, I was pressed for self-help by the pressures I have to pursue as a performance where my being is your instrument, and the finer your instrument, the more offensive you are as an artist," he revealed.

While my more friend had to do an intensive one-to-one coaching, I still can't afford it. Instead, I have to rely on my resources and fellowship, who wrote "Do Self-Help Books Help?" in the Journalic American magazine.

First, select self-help literature formed upon research or "psychological principles of change." He suggests books like "Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy" by David D. Burns; "Mind over Mood: Change How You Feel by Changing How You Think"; by Dennis Greenberger and Christine Padesky; and "Coping with Stress: A Step-Free Approach to Coping with Anxiety Attacks," by George Chan.

Second, research on the author's credentials. Anthony Robbins, for instance, wasn't even psychiatrist.

Third, be careful of books that have inflated promises because those tend to be more spurious based than scientific.

Finally, **be cynical and don't self-help—self-cure.** Power of our aspiration exercises like the soul dust, but don't lose hope.

People my age could use self-help, but feel like we can no longer trust these books. Leave the gurus to hide the dust, and find the ones that really work. No wonder 7 spread lenses in the self-help aisle and have trouble finding the right book for one. But I'm sure one day soon, I will.

How reliable is hypnotic regression?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

Do the things the subject sees make sense to him or not? Do they clarify or add meaning to his present life experiences?

a READER who signed himself or herself "Disbelieved" asked her or she sees on the Internet an article I wrote about reincarnation, and wondered if he or she has been given some opinion because of something strange that happened two years ago, and "since then I have not found any peace."

The reader said he or she had seen people on the Internet undergo hypnotic regression and even "left me if they were actually remembering your entrance or merely making things up.

"I heard you do hypnotic regression," continued this mail. "So I wanted to ask the following questions:

1. "Does it hypnotized subject still have control over himself? If so, how would it be like? Would he be just saying what the hypnotist says?"

Actually, hypnosis hypnotism has been around since the 19th century, there are still so many misconceptions about it, mainly because of the publicity generated by stage hypnotists who perform such things merely for entertainment purposes.

Actually, there are several degrees or states of hypnosis. In a light hypnotic state the subject is still conscious and aware of things happening around him. He is still in control of himself and his actions. However, although he is in a heightened state of suggestibility.

An ethical and professional hypnotist will not give even a slight hint or suggestion as to what the subject will see or experience during regression, but will merely guide him to remember what is already in the memory bank of his subconscious mind.

In a deep hypnotic state, it is possible for the subject not to remember what happened, but this does him no good because no learning takes place in that case. Hot-like hypnotic regression essentially of one reason, but this results of a past life experience.

How does it feel like? It is like dreaming but you know you are awake. It is difficult to describe this because state as currently One has to experience it himself.

Factual proof

2. "If you remember something during hypnosis, how could one tell if there exist actual memories or not? How convincing would it be?"

Almost everyone who has undergone a possible hypnotic regression thinks at first that he is merely imagining what is happening. But sometimes one finds himself in factual proof of what he has seen under hypnosis.

The question one should ask many ask is, do the things the subject sees make sense to him or not? Do they clarify or add meaning to his present life experiences? If they do, then they are most likely not products of his imagination.

However, there are rarely times when one remembers. It is possible for this person to be merely making up what he is seeing. But then, who is the fool-ing? If a person sees himself in the past as an important or known historical, religious or political figure, like Moses, Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte or Cleopatra, it is most likely genuinely experienced.

One woman, for example, told me with great conviction that she saw herself in her Mary Magdalene in a past life. I answer told her, "Said I saw myself as Jesus Christ!"

3. "Is it true some down these hypnotic sessions or are more true?"

I chose do it. I have as more one.

A "down small) would a particular hypnotic regression session" is one in which the subject is merely making up "fake" memories, fantasy and fantasizing" (see Schaefer/Judith 123). I can share true group hypnotic regression for all participants. It is part of the course. But I also do individual past life regression by appointment if there is a particular serious concern that a person has, which can be traced to a previous life's memory. The past as an important or known historical, religious or political figure, like Moses, Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte or Cleopatra, it is most likely genuinely experienced.

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a changed separately for a very reasonable fee.

Each session may last for as short as an hour or as long as three hours, depending on results as it was. The whole value one can expect from such a session. If in seconds, you will come out with letters and more understanding person who is conscious of his karmic obligations with other people. You will understand more clearly your life's history by getting a glimpse of what you did in the past.

At its worst, nothing happens and you remain the way you are now.

The next lunchtime, hypnosis and Reincarnation Seminar is on Feb. 12, 1-7 p.m.; "Basic ESP and Intuition Development Seminar" Feb. 19-20, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; at Rm. 308 Prince Plaza 1 Condo, Legaspi St., Goodwill, Makati City. 09197245; mobile 8159899; e-mail jaimelicauco@yahoo.com; Visit www.jaimelicauco.com.

How to defy time the natural way

AS ANOTHER year approaches and a new birthday is upon us, we eventually look at our image in the mirror. We examine possible evidence of wear and tear caused by the passage of time and the onslaught of nature.

What if there is a better way to defy Father Time and it's ravages, called anti-aging drugs to him. But the natural means, according to psychologists, is the best truth—the will to live. Longevity experts maintain that while people want to live longer, they also want to look younger. Fortunately, age and strength they have in their youth.

Women, in particular, would like to stay young and attractive. Therefore, the challenge would be to live longer and remain looking good. For this, there are many and exact ways are available to all.

Super foods

Let's start from the inside. Here is a list of super foods that have been written about by natural health experts:

● Berries—Blueberries, strawberries, cranberries, blackberries, boysenberries and acai all belong to a family of fruits that contain phytonutrients which block cholesterol and sugar levels.

● Wild Salmon—is the latest fancy to be discovered by the West from the Patagonia region of Chile. This omega-3 fatty fish is almost double the anti-oxidant power of acai, making it the No. 1 super food in the world today. An ancient food eaten by hardy fishermen, major has a dark purplish pigment, which is rich in powerful source and anti-inflammatory medicine that eases arthritis and diabetic conditions. Many called the heart helper, it is said to have improved the general well-being of heart patients because of its high Omega-3 fatty acids specializes in cell-to-cell communication.

Wild Yam—$17,000 as against the $6,000 blue values of acai. It fights free radical damage, the cause of inflammation and cancer.

● Greens—Eating green foods, especially spinach, is all kinds like orchid, alfalfa, mung bean, bean sprouts, ensures you get an adequate supply of enzymes. Remember that enzyme production declines as one ages. These greens are meant to be eaten raw and fresh, as cooking kills the enzymes. If you only want to know the secret to beautiful skin, load up on the good stuff: chlorophyll-rich vegetables, super fruits and spices. Plus, 10-15 glasses of water daily, regular exercise, extra supplementation of vitamin E.

For speed morning, start my [drug of choice] with alfalfa, a source of anti-chlorophyll that helps cleanse the blood and detoxify your system. (Energy—Kasama, 09181918888)

How your fill of spinach at last head chef Cindy Quintero. Long food connoisseur for "$20,000,000" Cindy is a whole specializes in well-to-eating.

Wrinkles away

Wrinkles appear beginning in your late 20s when the skin starts losing its elasticity. Collagen, its main component, starts to break down in some areas over the years because of several factors—poor diet, overexposure to the sun, pollution, bad habits (like cigarette-smoking, excessive alcohol intake). All these can lead to an accelerated loss of skin and the natural aging process.

Perhaps one of the most welcomed and accepted cosmetic treats, through its history is the discovery of botox's effectiveness in addressing the wrinkle problem. There is belief that if you do not treat what are lines and wrinkles on your face, it will attract many more.

Dr. Ary Sabido, ENT/head and neck surgeon and face specialist, explains that while wrinkles cannot be avoided, something can be done about them. A respected botox expert, Gallery advises individuals to get only a highly trained doctor for their botox treatments. In some cases, more wrinkles appear after a botox session because, when a set of facial muscles is relaxed repeatedly, adjacent untreated muscles might be required to work harder.

Example: When the frown line between the brows is injected without touching the forehead, then wrinkles could appear there, or under ridge of the nose. This is why the trained eye and hands of a doctor is required, to be or she can consider the look of the face as a whole.

Aside for consideration are the area around the eyes, forehead, even the chin. Dr. Sabido also mentions because that wrinkle look, which can be smoothened and softly reshaped. (Contact Dino, tel 8420020, 0917-5096288)

Health drink

Mix strawberries and banana in a blender. Add ½ cup of soy or nonfat milk. Drink up to energize your day.

(ABOUT TUESDAY: "Life and love are on my side.")

Love and light!

FDA approves new drug for blood cancer

ROCHE ANNOUNCED that week that The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved rituximab as maintenance treatment for patients with advanced follicular lymphoma (an indolent blood cancer), who responded to initial treatment. This milestone follows this clearance of rituximab by the European Commission in October 2010.

"The approval is important because it shows that maintenance with rituximab, after initial therapy with rituximab and chemotherapy, further reduces the risk of relapse," said Bill Rowan, head of global development and chief medical officer at Roche.

Follicular lymphoma (FL) is considered incurable, and it often is treated for periods of relapse and remission over a number of years.

According to American Cancer Society, an estimated 1774,000 Americans are living with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL). Approximately 65,540 Americans were newly diagnosed with NHL in the United States in 2010. Of those diagnosed with NHL, one in five patients will have follicular lymphoma.

The FDA approval was based on data from a Phase III study, France, an international, multicenter, randomized clinical study that enrolled 1,217 patients with previously untreated advanced follicular lymphoma.

FL is a common type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL). Approximately 200,000 people worldwide are diagnosed with NHL each year, and FL accounts for about one in five of those cases.

It can occur at any time during adulthood, though people are typically diagnosed during their late middle, affecting both men and women.

ENTERTAINMENT

Lira Soriano-G. Velarde

Rap artist Gloc-9 debuts at No. 5

THE TOP-SELLING albums in the country for the week Jan. 24-30 based on Odyssey Music & Video's nationwide sales reports:

OPM

1) Willie Revillame, "I Love You," 10 cds; 2) Jovit Baldivino, "Pakilabi," 3 cds; 3) Jovit Baldivino, [illegible]

KYLA'S fantasy date is Juris Martinez; Jay-R's favorite love song is Mary J. Blige's "You Are My Everything"

CHOOSE YOUR *Valentine* SHOW

Getting romantic: The CompanY, Echo, Jay-R and Kyla

EVERY YEAR, hopeless romantic Inquirer helps readers pick the best show for that special date, by asking the concert artists what they have in store for audiences.

And I Love Her'

Jessica Sanchez, Feb. 11 and 12, Ecotrio, Promenade Greenhills; Call 893-0000, 721-6720 or 756-2370 to 73

'Soulmates'

Jay-R and Kyla, Feb. 11, The Celebrations, Tagaig; Call 839-9825 to 27, 869-8001 or 0915-7603330

A Big Band Love Affair'

The CompanY, Feb. 14, New World Hotel Grand Ballroom, Makati; with guests Bo Cornelio and Stephanie Reese; Call 891-0999 or 276-3334

What was the most unique Valentine's Day you've ever experienced?

Jessica Sanchez: My ex-girlfriend's (Stuart Evangelista) birthday falls on Feb. 14, so it was like a double celebration then.

Jay-R: My girlfriend surprised me with a very nice gift. She put together some pictures from our first dates and sprinkled glitter with a nice message in a frame. Every minute of her time was devoted to thinking. Filipinos don't have to ask how she did it.

Kyla: I always tell this story. I had a concert, and my boyfriend now, who was courting me then, searched the dress. He wore a shirt with my picture on it and the words "I Love Nanie." It was sweet because I was busy while I was singing onstage.

Moy Ortiz: I went on a pilgrimage to visit ancient churches last week.

Cecille Bautista: I can't remember. We've been working every Valentine's Day for more than two decades.

Jay Sleuyan: Every year is unique, since the 1990s till today. I always work on Valentine's Day as a singer/actor.

Sweet Plamadis: Every year, The Company! has a unique Valentine show.

Bo Cornelio: I am thrilled shaken at the pushing for with my partner before we reunited Michel Legrand at PICC. We were scared we wouldn't make it in time due to traffic.

Where was your happiest Valentine's Day and why?

Jericho: I always had fun on valentine's Day with all my ex-girlfriends.

Jay-R: Last year was the first Valentine's I spent with my Beauty Queen.

Kyla: The last five years have been memorable.

SEE PAGE B2

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Choose Your Valentine Show

Pantograph D1

May: Last year was a real Valentine! Despite competition from foreign acts are filled up the grand ballroom of a five-star hotel in Manila!

Gorilla: It must have been the first one I spent with my then-boyfriend, now-my-husband, because I was so-so I realized he was The One.

Jay: I don't remember. I'm excited this year because there's a major concert.

Imee: Feb. 14, 2000. My first Valentine's Day as a wife and a mom to-be-soon.

Ito: Each one was very happy since I always spend it with my family. Loving unconditionally is much more fulfilling than looking or waiting for love to find you.

Who's your famous date?

Sotelo: Either Natalie Portman or Anne Hathaway (of the film "Rachel").

Jay-R: Miss Philippines International Janine Tenoso-Gutierrez.

Kyla: Josh Groban.

May: A unicorn from Atlantis that was found in the Bermuda triangle!

Gorilla: I don't have any fantasy dates other than my husband. Well, maybe my favorite massage therapist for a fantastic rubdown.

Jay: Anyone with a car.

Imee: Hugh Jackman and John Mayer (one at a time).

Ito: Julia Roberts is still at the top of my list.

What's your latest favorite love song and why?

Sotelo: I've been listening to Maroon 5's "It's Just A Rainy Day" and also "Somethings," "All My Lovin'" and "And I Love Her." Good songs!

Jay-R: "You Are My Everything" by Gary Valenciano. Robin dedicated that song to me.

odyssey
MUSIC & VIDEO

Rap...

From page D1

"I'd Do Anything For Love," Star; 4) Various Artists, "By Popular Demand 3," Universal; 5) Gloc-9, "Salonpas," Sony; 6) Pupil, "Liberty Of The Infinite Soul," Sony; 7) Pinoy Colonges, "Pusha," Universal; 8) Lea Salonga, "Your Songs," Sony; 9) Regine Velasquez, "Fantasia," Universal; 10) Gary Valenciano, "My Music, My Life," Star

Overall

1) Willie Revillame, "I Love You," Sony; 2) Taylor Swift, "Speak Now Deluxe Edition," MCA; 3) Avril Bidelevine, "Goldfinger," Star; 4) Stevie Mars, "Doo Wops & Hooligans," Warner; 5) Jim G, "It's Anyone," Universal; 6) Avril Bidelevine, "I'd Do Anything For Love," Star; 7) Various Artists, "By Popular Demand 3," Universal; 8) Gloc-9, "Salonpas," Sony; 9) Katy Perry, "Teenage Dream," Polydust; 10) Taylor Swift, "Taylor Swift," MCA

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Promo runs from
January 19 - February 19, 2011
Glorietta
Greenbelt
MARQUEE MALL

Lovey-dovey Claudine and Raymart spotted in HK

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

Getting...

From page D9

Jenilee: Martin Stevens and Sarah Geronimo's concert.

Jayell: I want to watch Rizza. She has a show on Valentine's Day with Christian Bautista.

Kyla: Barbra Streisand. Perfect for Valentine's.

Mica: A musical act that has integrity and substance.

Cecille: I would just like to have a quiet romantic date with my husband. I want him all to myself.

Jay: Heaven's.

Jessey: A musical theater play.

Bo: I'll just probably go some place special with my family and take advantage of the time to rest.

Why should we watch your show?

Jenilee: Sir na it's a dream come true and I will be singing songs that I really like. I have a very special guest and it's a secret. Pedo Salenga and I will be directing. This is a concert/variety show not just for couples, but for singles as well.

Jayell: He can make you fall in love all over again. We will give you that butterfly in your stomach feeling like it was your first date.

Kyla: If you want to just chill and have a great time, come and watch our show.

Mica: Because it has integrity, substance and soul.

Cecille: Because we guarantee romance and a relishing good time.

Jay: Because it's the best among the rest! Really.

Jessey: Because we are The Company!

Bo: This is the first time that I'll be performing with a multi-awarded group like The Company and a very versatile chanteuse Stephanie Jessey.